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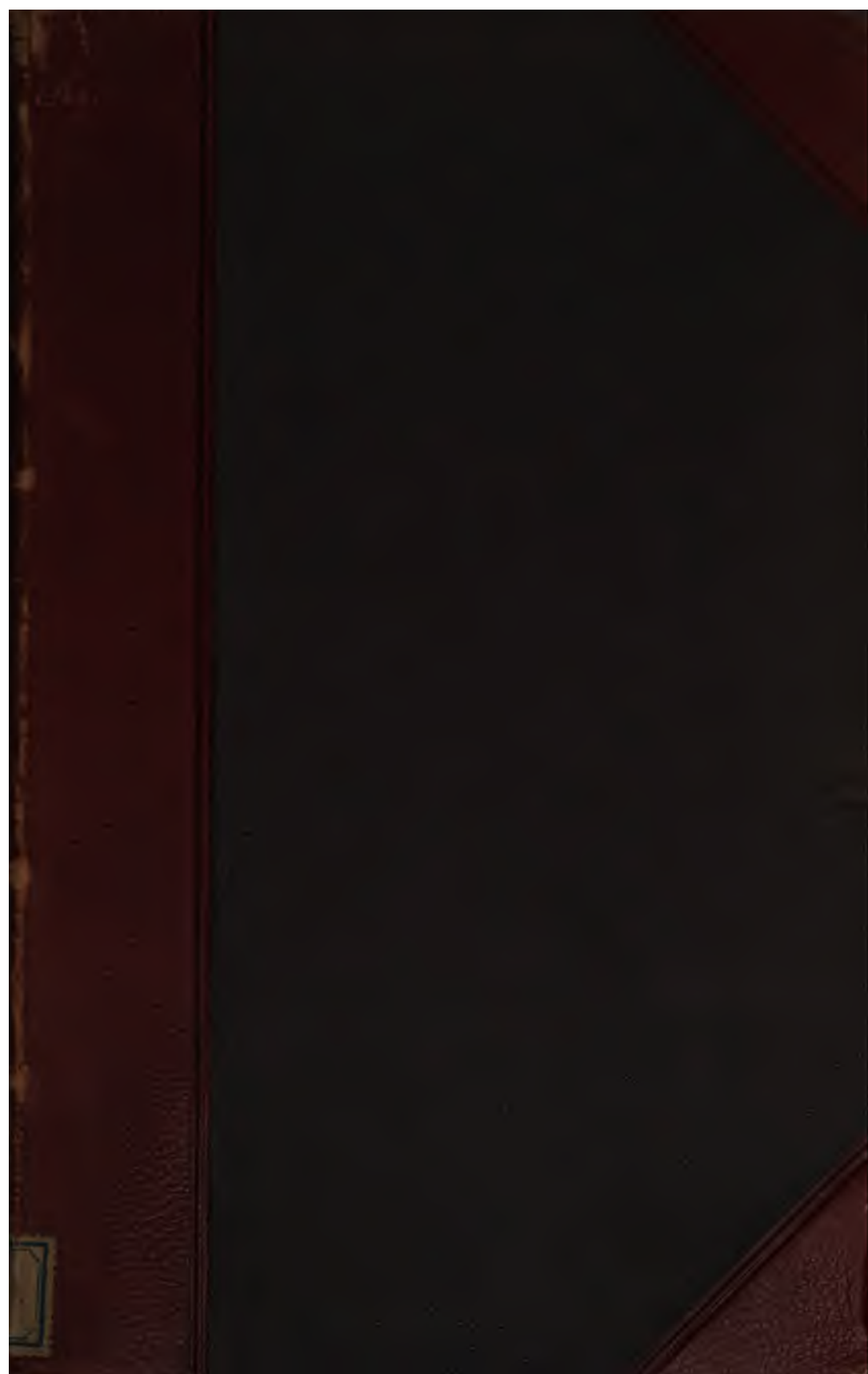
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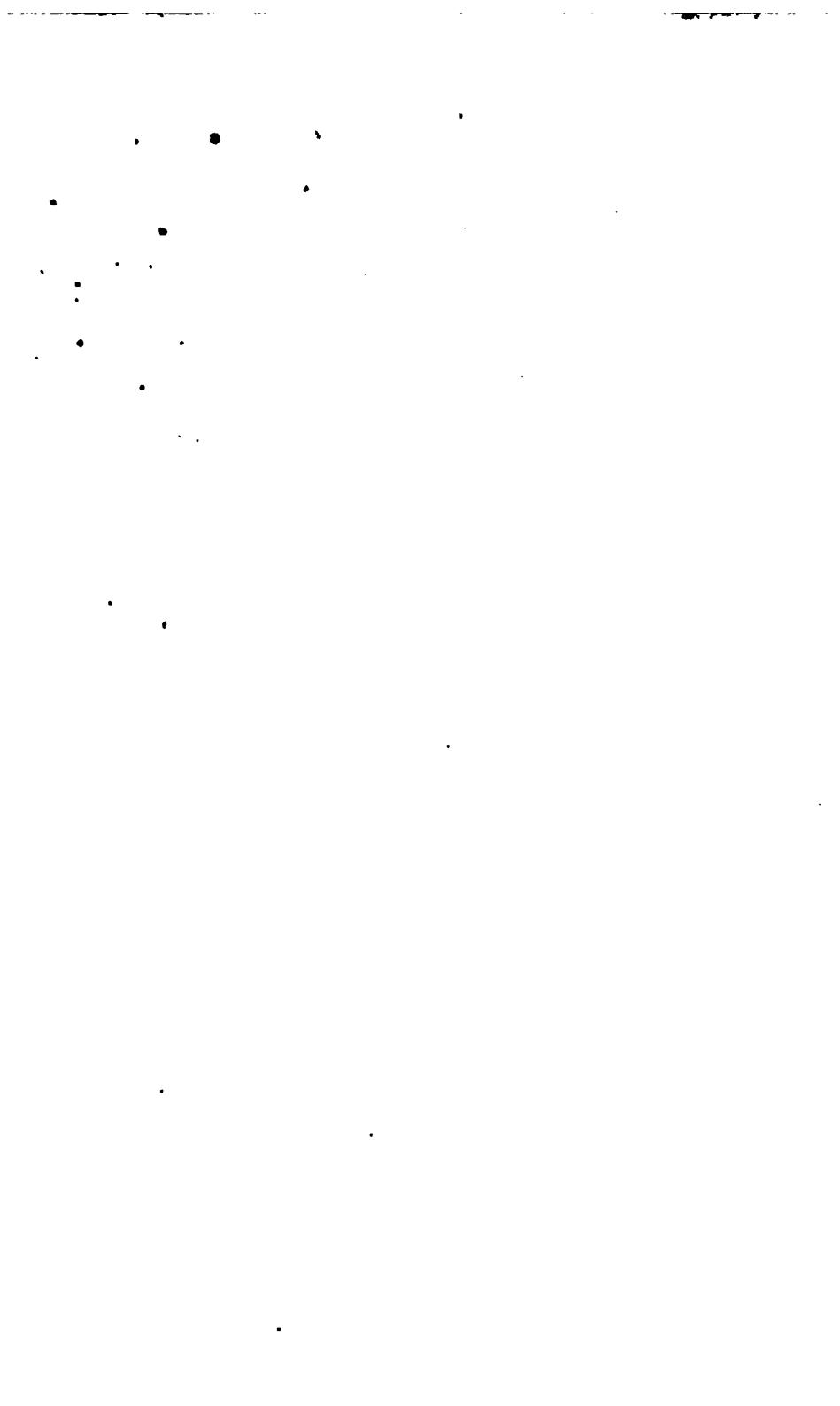




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A SUMMER MONTH IN NORMANDY

IN EIGHT CHAPTERS

BY

B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING

AUTHOR OF 'FAIR ROSAMOND,' ETC.



LONDON

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON

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A SUMMER MONTH IN NORMANDY.

CHAPTER I.

FROM LONDON TO LE HÂVRE.

IT was while seated at breakfast, in a certain month of July not long ago, in the cheerful old-fashioned parlour of a friend's house in Cheshire, that I received a letter which at once settled a vexed question, viz., what should I do with myself during the month of August? There seemed to be every prospect of much such another miserable summer as we shivered through in the previous year, and travelling would, in that case, be not very enjoyable. Watering places are an abomination to me, and I had not a single invitation. So I jumped at my mother's proposal that I should take her to Le Hâvre, where she proposed to spend a month, especially as it was coupled with the announcement that a brother, my favourite companion of all men living, had promised to be of the

party. We would take apartments at St. Adresse, or elsewhere, where my mother could have the benefits of quiet and sea air, of which she stood sadly in need, and we, making these our headquarters, could explore the surrounding country, and see something of Normandy, which was new ground to both of us. It was only necessary to write and say 'Yes;' and after arranging to spend a few days in London, so as to wind up some business, I met my fellow-travellers as appointed, and all three proceeded to St. Katherine's Wharf. We were all sea born, and good sailors, so that we had agreed to go by water. We should have the pleasure of the twenty-four hours' passage, and there was the additional inducement that this way of travelling would be cheap as well as agreeable, as we could each obtain for £1, 4s. a return ticket which would last for a month, the limit of our intended stay.

The 'John Bull' lay down the river, and there happened to be a good many passengers, so it was 2 P.M. instead of noon before the boats had deposited all on board, and even good-natured Captain Wilson waxed wroth at the prospect of missing the tide; but at last all was complete, and we started, the weather having cleared up all of a sudden, and even the marshes down the river looking cheerful. The passage was as pleasant as could be wished, as we had a sea just fresh enough to be pretty, without upsetting the stomachs of weak passengers; to be sure the 'John Bull' creaked a good deal in the night, when one chanced to wake

up and hear it, but being the oldest boat in the service, and built of teak, that was not to be wondered at. The accommodation was admirable, the table liberal and reasonable, and the captain as jolly a sailor as ever stepped on deck. So the time passed quickly until a bright, hot, Lammas afternoon found us running along the coast of Normandy, and at about three o'clock we had rounded Point de la Hève with its twin light-houses, and were standing into the harbour of Le Havre.

There was something wonderfully homelike to us, after a long absence from Scotland, in the look of the town as we steamed up to the quay. Barring the dirt, one could not help thinking of Greenock on looking at the grey houses with their steep slate roofs, the gentle hills in the background, and the women dressed exactly like our own people in the west. To be sure, the men wore blouses and spoke French, or what they believed to be that language, but otherwise they bore a strong family resemblance to 'caugers,' and had probably quite as little conscience. It now became a question as to where we were to lodge, and what the *douaniers* would say to our luggage; I had just found out that one of our party had packed up a quantity of tea, and I myself had, oblivious of duty, brought an equally necessary store of tobacco. The difficulty was solved by the steward's suggestion that we should leave everything on board for the present, and fetch our boxes when we had found apartments. Here was an opening! We stuffed the contraband articles into our

pockets and went innocently on shore, starting in quest of a resting place. It was at once decided that neither St. Adresse nor Ingouville would suit ; the former was too far from the town for an invalid, who still had no desire for actual isolation, and the latter was too steep for a bad walker. So, said somebody, ' Why shouldn't we lodge in the town itself ? It may not be fashionable, but it will be much more convenient ; ' and we set out along the Grand Quai. Soon a clean looking house met our eyes at No. 15, the ground floor of which was occupied by a small café, whilst the remainder was let out in apartments. Entering this we were met by a civil man, the proprietor, M. Hergot, who gave us over to madame, his wife, to be shown the rooms *au seconde* ; they were all that could be wished, with one exception—madame had the assurance to want 10 francs a day for them ! Being at once offered 5 francs she demurred, but was promptly overruled by her husband ; and it is a curious instance of the prevalent Continental habit of asking more than will be accepted, that during all the time we were there they never attempted to overreach us in anything, as might have been expected from such a beginning ; it never occurred to them that there was any moral obliquity in getting double your price if anyone was fool enough to give it. They were thoroughly good, kind, homely people, who were always going out of their way to make their lodgers comfortable, and I hope they will do as well as they deserve in their house ; it has a first rate view of the bay, and the quay in front always

presents a cheerful bustling appearance, added to which it is within a few minutes of all the best shops. Only, unfortunately for some people, nobody in the house has any English. Le Havre, as a rule, goes in for English, most of the shops claiming a knowledge of the language. I never but once knew anyone try to speak it, and then the result was a *baragouin* so utterly unintelligible that I implored Mademoiselle, who sold the tobacco, to resume her native tongue, much to her mortification, poor thing! Still it facilitated business.

Not the least important person in the establishment, in his own opinion, was the small boy, Joseph by name, who officiated as waiter in the '*café*' downstairs, and occasionally brought up parcels, and attended upon us. He took a most lively interest in all our proceedings, a feeling which culminated on the first Sunday morning, when he was requested by my mother to direct her to the English Church, '*Vous êtes Protestante!*' said he in horror and grief, '*Alors vous n'irez pas aux cioux!*' This was a comfortable dogmatic settlement of the question, which seemed to satisfy his conscience, and having delivered his soul he gave the necessary directions, and always afterwards treated the whole party as people whose delightful society should be made the most of, as it would be only for this world.

It must be owned that there was not much to attract Joseph or anybody else in the dreary function at the little chapel in the Rue d'Orleans. With some scruples

on the subject of schism, we attended it twice, and nothing could be much more depressing. A place that looked like a meeting-house, a congregation seemingly afraid of hearing their own voices, and a service consisting of matins, litany, and ante-communion office, with a sermon afterwards, as if it were not long enough without. However, a new church was being built near the Rue Mexico, and most likely things will be better managed there, as the officiating ministers seemed to be disposed to do their best with the means at their disposal. There is an American chapel in the town, but that is dedicated to some form of dissent. There is also a French Protestant Church, into which we got by mistake one Sunday ; I need hardly say that we very soon came out again ! The tenets of the preacher were a pleasing mixture of Deism and Republicanism, and he himself was highly suggestive of the constable in Punch and Judy. Notre Dame, which is the principal church in the town, is simply hideous, especially the interior ; the tower is simple and tolerably inoffensive, and there are traces among the gargoyles of an attempt at good architecture, but the greater portion of the edifice is in a vulgar sort of Italian style, than which nothing could be more incongruous with the surroundings. The best of the other churches is the new one of the Immaculate Conception, which is pretty and in good taste.

We soon settled down comfortably in our new abode, and as the weather promised to continue very fine, determined to remain in Le Havre for a few days, and

enjoy the sea-bathing and other amusements of the place before setting out on our proposed jaunt in Normandy. The chief sights we found were the public garden, where the band played on Thursday and Sunday afternoons, the museum, and the aquarium. Then there were Harfleur and Etretat, both within walking distance, to be visited; and when disposed for quiet, we had always the splendid sea view to entertain us, and the stroll along the shore by St. Adresse, the favourite haunt of Bernardin St. Pierre, promised to be a pleasant one. As for the sea bathing, it could not be better anywhere, as the sea is remarkably fine. The only caution to be observed is that in swimming it is always necessary to bear to the right, on account of the powerful current that sweeps round Point de la Hève into the *Aber*, or estuary of the Seine, which first named the town. Most people patronize Frascati's establishment, attached to the big hotel of the same name; but there are several others quite as good and rather cheaper; we always went to the Bains Colboc, a little nearer to St. Adresse, kept by a handsome southern-looking man named Morin. It had the advantage of a small gymnasium, which was an agreeable amusement in the intervals of bathing.

There are two theatres, the principal one in the Place Louis Seize, where they played nothing but *La Fille de Madame Angot* all the time we were in Le Havre, and the other, the *Ambigu Havraises*, in the Cours de la République, where they attempted better

things, and gave *Tartuffe* with a decent company, and a couple of Parisian stars. Of the one or two gardens at which dancing, etc., goes on, I do not speak ; I believe there are people who find such places amusing.

The town itself has been so modernised during the last few years, that, excepting in some of the older streets, there is little left to repay the lover of the picturesque. But *en revanche*, those who like broad cheerful thoroughfares, with gay shops in them, will find the Rue de Paris very much to their taste, and when the several boulevards are finished they promise to be really noble streets. The two principal squares are also fine open places, especially that in which the Hôtel de Ville stands, and which has a tastefully laid out garden in the centre, with some fine magnolias and larger trees.

Of course the guide books speak of the quays and docks as the principal attractions of Le Havre, and no doubt they are good and wonderful ; but apart from the liveliness necessarily attaching to such places, one soon gets tired of mere shipping dépôts, and there are quite enough ways of passing the time, for those who do not need violent excitement, without having recourse to the docks for amusement.

Those who are so wedded to insular customs as to find no pleasure when forced to leave their ordinary home mode of life, may dislike having to go out every day for dinner, which is the only way of getting it comfortably when you have not a regular establishment.

But there is really no hardship in it—it is a purely sentimental grievance, and you may dine comfortably, cheaply, and well, at more than one restaurant. We generally frequented one on the Quai d'Orleans, kept by a M. Gorgy ; I only wish one could get as good and as well appointed a meal in London for a price at all corresponding to what we used to pay. If people cannot do without beefsteak and beer, those luxuries are to be had at the English hotel in the Rue des Tuileries, kept by a civil man named Alton (a Freemason), and I believe his charges are not excessive.

CHAPTER II.

LE HÂVRE AND ITS ENVIRONS.

PERHAPS the pleasantest walk near Le Havre is the short one of about five miles to Harfleur. Taking the road from the north end of the Cours de la République you soon pass out of the town into the suburb of Graville St. Honorine, with its pretty houses and gardens, and its fine old church, which stands among thick trees on the slope to the left hand, and is by no means to remain unvisited. But in the meantime the way passes along beneath high banks to the left, whilst on the right the land dips and spreads out in broad flat meadows for about a mile between the road and the river, across which may be seen the low cliffs of the opposite shore, with Honfleur in the distance. These meadows are in part taken up for grazing purposes, but near the road the land is utilised by market gardeners. The general view recalls the links of Forth very strongly, and gives the idea that the river must originally have occupied a much wider bed than is now the case; in fact, were this not the case, Harfleur would hardly have held the position which it undoubtedly did, as a key of the Seine, in Henry the Fifth's time.

Just before entering the village, for it hardly deserves the name of a town nowadays, there is a remarkably fine specimen of the half-timbered houses of the province, an old auberge upon the left; it is worth while to go in and spend a few centimes in cider, just to see the stone kitchen with its antique hearth, its ceiling of beams, and its oak furniture. Every one of these Norman inns of the poorer class contains at least an oak press and an eight-day clock, and many of them have furniture that would drive a collector frantic with desire. Were it not for the difficulty of transport, it would be worth while hunting up such places, as one might probably buy as much in these parts for a few francs as would cost pounds in London. The thing that strikes one in Harfleur principally is, what on earth can have become of the place that Henry stormed? There is the old church, which he is said to have founded, and there are a few houses round it, also there are some traces of the town walls; but it is as difficult to realize that this quiet little Norman village was ever an important fortress, as to bring oneself to believe that Sandwich was once a rather bustling seaport town. Did the ramparts stretch where those pleasant hedges run? And is that gap in the trees, through which one looks down to the Seine, in the same position as was 'the breach'? There is no saying. Nature, the great mother and mistress, has come silently and set her own property all

right again: how Nature does scoff at the devices of man! I remember a favourite backwater of mine on the Thames, where I used to bathe on hot days and dream on cool evenings, and how sorry I felt when the workmen came and threw up mounds of earth beyond the flags and the herb-willow, because some rich man was going to turn my meadows into a house and grounds. Well, he came to grief, and the works were stopped; in a few weeks' time, Dame Nature had planted green things all over those mounds, and by next summer the banks were prettier than ever, because the herb-willow had struck root in the new soil, and the mounds of grass and flowers shut out everything but the sky on that side—the old Mother knew just what I wanted, and perhaps she—or perhaps her Master—made it all right for me. Superstition? Yes, some people are superstitious, you know; we have all our weaknesses.

On the way back from Harfleur, after lounging in the dreamy sunlight to see the stream come under the old bridge for the water mill, until we felt like bees or owls belated, we went up the steep path which leads to the church of Graville St. Honorine already mentioned. The church itself is one of the finest specimens of the early Norman style in the whole of the province, and, to the credit of the curé, or his parishioners, or both, is kept in good repair, without any attempt at so-called restoration, and is well decorated without being

overdone. There are still considerable remains of the conventual buildings, of which it originally formed part, and from the terrace on the south side the whole expanse of which I spoke, as lying between this place and Honfleur, may be viewed better than from any spot on the road. One of the most interesting portions of the building, which is said to be of the eleventh century, is the north aisle. Here, in a canopied niche, lately restored, is the stone coffin of the saint in whose honour the church was consecrated; it is of a peculiar shape, with a sloping top; and in one side a circular opening, which looks as if it had been intended to afford a view of the features of the occupant. The coffin is empty now, as it has been for the last nine hundred years and more, for, as an inscription on the wall tells us, the body of St. Honorine was, in the year 897, removed to Conflans, to avoid the desecration of the Danes. It does not go on to state, as was the case, that, when the danger was overpast, the monks of Conflans calmly refused to restore their charge. There seems to be some little doubt in the minds of authorities as to the proper day sacred to St. Honorine Vierge et Martyre: the Bollandists quote both 27th February and 27th March, but probably one of these days was the original festival, and the other records the translation.

The record on the church wall is not without interest from a philological point of view. In the

ordinary notices of the translation of St. Honorine, the dreaded invaders are always vaguely described as 'Normans,' but the more precise mention of 'les Danois' points to a fact which is amply borne out by the relics of local nomenclature, viz., that it was from Denmark, and not from Norway, that the conquerors sailed. For example, the suffix 'tot,' so common in the province, as at Tuetot, Lilletot, Routot, or Berquetot, is the Danish 'toft,' *i.e.*, an inclosure, which in our own country we find exclusively in the old Danelagh, as at Lowestoft. Again, 'byr,' meaning originally a farm, which is a thorough test-word of Danish colonisation, occurs constantly under the form of 'bue,' or 'bœuf;' here again in England the form survives under the contraction of 'by,' in that district where one would naturally look for it. On the other hand, the most purely distinctive Norwegian suffix 'thwaite,' nearly equivalent to 'field,' is entirely wanting in Normandy. Much might be written on this subject, but it might not possess equal interest to the writer and the reader.

To those who are in search of a walk for walking sake, I cannot recommend a better road than that which leads across the down country between Le Havre and Etretat. The latter place, which lies in a sheltered nook of the coast, at a distance of about eighteen miles, has not much to distinguish it from ordinary watering places, but the walk there is a pleasant one, through cornfields and a country

strongly recalling the immediate neighbourhood of Brighton. I shall always recall the first time we traversed the road, from its having been the first time I met with one of these roadside crucifixes, which are so common in Calvados. It stood, surrounded by a little grove of aspens, by the road side, just outside the little village of Octeville, and there seemed something appropriate in the surroundings, when one remembered the old legend of the tree. There is something very pathetic to me in those wayside crucifixes; true, the modelling or the colouring might not have satisfied the longings of Alonzo Cano, but the mind does not feel too critical on coming suddenly upon the solemn figure, that hangs with a mute appeal by the dusty high-road. 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?' Anyhow, the momentary hush that falls upon one's heart and voice does one no harm; we talk and hurry on quite fast enough in the ordinary course of life, and may well be thankful for any aid that helps us to pause and commune for a moment with ourselves and with our Master. I never see those emblems without recalling Hood's lovely lines in the 'Ode to Rae Wilson.'

Say, was it to my spirit's gain or loss,
One bright and balmy morning, as I went
From Liege's lovely environs to Ghent,
If hard by the wayside I found a cross,
That made me breathe a prayer upon the spot—
While Nature of herself, as if to trace
The emblem's use, had trailed around its base
The blue significant Forget-me-not?

Methought the claims of Charity to urge
 More forcibly, along with Faith and Hope,
 The pious choice had pitched upon the verge
 Of a delicious slope,
 Giving the eye much variegated scope ;
 'Look round,' it whispered, 'on that prospect rare,
 Those vales so verdant, and those hills so blue ;
 Enjoy the sunny world, so fresh and fair,
 But ' (how the simple legend pierced me thro')
 'Priez pour les malheureux.'

Octeville itself is not what I should call a gay place. On the occasion of our first visit it was a very hot day, and everybody was sitting tranquilly outside their houses doing nothing, and not saying much ; that was about noon, and, on returning the same way at five o'clock, all the inhabitants were in precisely the same situations and attitudes. But that was on an ordinary working day ; we revisited the village on St. Louis's day, when it was announced as being *en fête*. The festival was observed by everybody stopping indoors, for a change apparently, for not a soul was to be seen, with the exception of some half-dozen men grouped round a portable shooting booth, who shot at a pipe bowl, and missed it with singular precision. Two of the most unsuccessful marksmen were said to be ex-soldiers, and, if all the French army shot as wildly as they did, the German successes are partly explained.

Good walkers may go on to Fècamp, and visit the old abbey there, but the place may more conveniently be reached by rail, and there is nothing very wonderful to see when it has been done. Then there is Lillebonne, with its Roman amphitheatre.

theatre, which has been described *usque ad nauseam*, but that may best be reached from Bolbec.

For those who, either from inability or from disinclination to walk, are compelled to seek diversion in Le Havre itself, there are two sights which afford a never-failing source of Sunday enjoyment to the townspeople, and one of which is well worth a visit, viz., the Museum and Library, and the Aquarium. The former, contained in a fine building at the end of the Grand Quai, may be distinguished at once by the statues of Casimir Delavigne and Bernardin de St. Pierre which ornament the gateway. As for its contents, they are very much of the usual description—mangy stuffed animals, weapons, inscriptions, coins, and shells; and, with the single exception of plaster casts, it would be difficult to name anything more saddening to the spirits than a collection of shells. True, there is a Picture Gallery, just as there is a Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's; but these who have once fled shuddering from its doors will hardly venture another visit. The library is a good one of the kind, but has little to attract the scholar or antiquarian. But the Aquarium is another matter, and is, to my mind, the best I ever saw. The dungeon at the Crystal Palace is not to be named in the same breath, and even the establishment at Brighton, splendid as it is, is not a pleasanter lounge. The building containing the collection has been built up of rocks in a tastefully laid out garden, in so artificial a manner that, on the outside, it

appears to be only a gigantic mass of rockwork, crowned with a little summerhouse, and ornamented by ferns and other plants suitable to the situation. At the foot of this is a pond, in which a seal disports himself, in company with a pelican, and sundry gulls and cormorants. These can be seen by all who enter the garden, which is free, and so can the water-fowl in another neighbouring pond, but to enter the Aquarium itself a charge of 75 centimes must be paid; an annual ticket may, however, be bought for 5 francs. Before entering the building, there is another attraction in the shape of sundry martens, jackals, and other small beasts in cages, well kept and looking healthy. The tanks within are carefully stocked, and the conger eels and octopi were larger and finer than those in our English aquariums; the sea anemones also were well represented. As pleasant a part of the show as anything was an old priest, evidently from the country, whose delight and wonder were perfectly childlike. I chanced to appeal to him as to the identity of some fish, upon which, with a beaming face, and a little scream of ecstasy, he replied—*'Je n'en sais rien, mon fils! Je n'ai jamais vu d'auparavant les poissons de mer!'* One felt sure that, when he got home after his visit to town, he would preach about it, and I should like to have heard the dear old man's sermon; he had the most beautiful face I ever saw, except that of a young nun in Rouen station. The faces, indeed, of

the older priests struck one generally by the contrast which they afforded to those of the younger; there was an air of refinement and breeding about the former which was sadly wanting in the latter; the men gave one the impression of having been selected from a class of society superior to that which now furnishes the ministry of the Church of Rome. I have heard that the same is the case in Ireland; it was certainly a noticeable feature in Normandy.

CHAPTER III.

FROM LE HÂVRE TO FALAISE AND CAEN.

HAVING, for the time being, exhausted the resources of Le Hâvre as far as amusement went, two of our party decided to push forward and carry out the original intention with which we visited Normandy, viz., of taking a short walking tour in some of the more interesting parts of the province. Our scheme was to reach Falaise in time for the annual horse fair, proceeding thence by way of Caen, Bayeux, St. Lo, and Coutances, to the border, whence we hoped to penetrate into Brittany; but this plan had afterwards to be modified. Leaving my mother comfortably settled in her own apartments, under the special charge of good-natured Madame Hergot, who felt herself highly flattered by the responsibility, we took boat on a fine bright morning for Honfleur, whence we proposed to perform the first stage of the journey by railway, and after a pleasant half-hour reached the quaint old town, which, as we had to wait rather more than an hour, we proceeded to explore. There was not much to see, apart from the two churches of St. Leonard and St. Catherine and indeed the former of these, though possessing a good west doorway, has no very distinguishing fea-

tures. The latter, however, amply repaid a visit. Originally, the church, in common with its quaint detached belfry, has been built entirely of wood; the belfry still remains in its original condition, as do the north, east, and south fronts of the main building, presenting the piebald appearance so familiar to one's eye in the 'magpie' houses of Cheshire and other parts of England, where the old manors and farms still resist the march of stucco. But about fifty years ago it seems that St. Catherine's was blessed with a curé who, like Bufo, had a taste, and this worthy proceeded to remodel the old building; so a stone Doric front was clapped on to the west end, where it looks as hideous as could be wished, and the interior was scraped, and pared, and white-washed. An old woman who conducted us over the church, which, strange to say, is kept locked, told us that the wooden pillars were formerly ornamented with carving. 'These,' said she, with a regretful sigh, 'have been suppressed.' One could not help wishing that some one had suppressed M. le Curé! Judging from panels which still remain in the organ loft and gallery, the carvings must have been good; but although the custodian seemed to think a good deal of some big pictures, especially of one by Jordaens, they struck us as being rather bad and very ugly. So we betook ourselves to the terminus. While waiting for the train we were accosted by a middle-aged Jew, who seemed disposed to be friendly, and was much disappointed to learn that we

were travelling only for pleasure, as he himself was travelling for a Parisian firm in the chocolate line. However, on finding that no business was to be done, he gave himself up to general conversation, and after a short eulogium on commerce, drew a brilliant sketch of the future which lay before two young men who had it still in their power to embrace a mercantile life. As we did not reciprocate his enthusiasm, he gave a little advice as to where we had better go; to visit Falaise was pronounced to be a waste of time, Caen was admitted to deserve a short inspection, but the one place which must on no account be omitted was Granville—there, indeed, one would see something worth the trouble! Matter of opinion, as we afterwards reflected during the few miserable hours spent in that detestable hole. Becoming communicative, and throwing aside reserve, our friend, who would have been all the better for a Turkish bath, launched forth into abuse of the Germans, upon the dirtiness of whose manners he was particularly severe, and wound up with frantic denunciation of the Emperor William. How the epithets poured from his mouth! ‘Rhinoceros and crocodile’ were two of the mildest, but ultimately the old gentleman’s remarks became in his fury wholly unfit for publication, after which he calmed down, lit his pipe, and with a farewell instruction to go to the Hôtel des Voyageurs, without specifying in what town, vanished into a third-class carriage. We got into another, in company with a sailor boy and a jolly-looking priest,

who, with his housekeeper, had come up from a country village to do some shopping in Honfleur. The train passed through pretty orchard country, not unlike some parts of Kent, and arrived at Lisieux, where carriages were to be changed for Mezidon. During the halt of an hour we took the opportunity of going through the town, which contains many fine old houses, both stone and half-timbered, especially one nearly opposite the great church of St. Pierre, of the latter part of the sixteenth century. St. Pierre is well worth a visit. It has the advantage of standing in a fine open space, and of being approached at the base of the west front by a great double staircase, which sets off the doorway and the tower admirably; the latter when complete must have been very grand. The interior is now chiefly remarkable for some almost obliterated frescoes, but historically, if not architecturally, St. Pierre may challenge comparison with many more celebrated cathedrals. Here Henry II. of England married Eleanor of Guienne; but even sadder interest attaches to the Lady Chapel, which was founded by Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, who condemned Jeanne d'Arc, in expiation of his false judgment of an innocent woman. Yet, in spite of such testimony, people have been found to declare that la Pucelle was not burned at all!

On our return to the station, we were accosted, whilst waiting, by a ruddy-faced man in a grey suit, who asked in curiously British French whether we spoke English. On being answered in the affirmative,

he requested information as to the train for Caen, and then as to the time of day. We told him that neither of us carried a watch. Singularly enough, neither did he, although he had a most valuable one; you see, it was an heirloom, and one could not be too careful! But there was one thing he *did* carry, as we found, and that was a smelling-bottle, which he soon produced and offered. I took a sniff from curiosity, but don't know what was in it; it certainly was neither salts nor chloroform. But at that moment we were summoned to the barrier, and our obliging acquaintance was left to practise his arts on somebody else. It struck me as really too brazen to attempt a hocussing trick on two men in a railway station! There were other symptoms of the fairs and races which were just then going on in all parts of the country. For instance, two men got into the carriage, who, if they were not gipsies, had at least Rommany blood in their veins; the subordinate looked half-idiotic and wholly a lout, but his companion was a refined-looking man, who, under his blouse, wore a well-made suit of good cloth, and who read the *Revue des deux Mondes*! Their luggage consisted of a camp stool and a suspicious-looking box, and the whole suggested a roulette table, with superior swindler as proprietor, and Caliban for the 'bonnet.' The other occupants of the carriage were three rather witch-like old ladies in black, who nevertheless proved good-natured and chatty. On my assisting one of them to carry a basket at Mezidon, which was our next change, she became over-

powered with gratitude, and talked all the way to Coulibœuf. 'Were we going to Falaise? Ah, so were they. That was, indeed, a charming place! Yes, there were hotels there without doubt, some of them not very dear. For her part, she did not know whether she could recommend one, but there were undoubtedly good hotels.' On reaching Falaise, after again changing at Coulibœuf, and waiting there for a maddening time, we bade farewell to the weird sisters, when she of the basket remarked in a tone of indifference that the 'Grand Cerf' was not a bad hotel, and they vanished into the night.

Scarcely had we quitted the station when another sign of the horse fair came before us in the form of a hearty 'Good night, sir,' from a most unmistakeable stud-groom, after which we passed down the darkening road, and so into the town, which was already making arrangements for going to bed, though it was little more than eight o'clock. The first question was where were we to put up, and above all, to dine? Now it struck us both, that the old lady's view on the subject of good hotels were not so likely to coincide with our own as were those of the old Jew traveller; and as one of us had a dim idea that Falaise was the town of which he last spoke, we enquired at a shop where they were putting up the shutters for the Hôtel des Voyageurs. In vain; there was no such place, but the proprietor offered to point out a lodging, and took us across the market place to the top of a dark sloping street, in which a swinging lamp was dimly visible

about half-way down. This being reached, proved to be over the door of a snug-looking inn, no other than the 'Grand Cerf' itself. So, as that house seemed to be our fate, in we went, and were met at the door by a good-looking woman of about thirty, who might have been looking out for us, as she promptly assured us of a double-bedded room and immediate dinner. Congratulating ourselves on our good luck in being so soon suited, we washed and went down into the large dim empty dining-room, when, as we entered at one door, a small one close by flew open, and in the light stood our friend of the railway, looking like a benevolent witch, and exclaiming, with a perfect yell of delight over her own cleverness, 'Ah, you did not expect to see *me*!' Having greeted and thanked her, she retired, and we sat down to a first-rate dinner, served by a man, a woman, and the stylish lady who had received us. It did just occur to one that the old woman had almost overdone her cleverness in her desire of giving us a surprise; as, had we, failing certain information, gone elsewhere, her little joke would have fallen just a trifle flat, and the elegant landlady, Madame Bouillard, would not have blessed her for the disappointment. But that old woman was a mystery altogether. We never saw her again; and when, on leaving, delighted with our treatment and its small cost, I expressed a wish to say good-bye to her, Madame replied in a reserved manner, '*Elle est parti*. So we settled it in our own minds that we had at last met with the original fairy godmother, and had had

the good luck to befriend her, whereupon she had recommended us to the care of her *fillemle*, and having once more appeared to us, had started for her own palace.

Falaise itself is about as charming an old town as any in Normandy. Apart from the historic interest which attaches to the residence of Robert the Devil, and the birthplace of his more celebrated son, the place has hitherto escaped the ravages of restoration and improvement in an unusual degree, so that a trustworthy notion may be gained from its streets and houses of what was the appearance of a town in the middle ages. Added to this, the surrounding country, with its apple orchards and rolling scenery, is one of the fairest spots in the province, and in spring time, when the trees are blooming, must be a miracle of beauty. Perhaps it was not always quite such a sleepy old place; at present it gives one the idea of having settled comfortably down to ruminate over its past greatness, and as if the yearly awakening at the time of its fair must be rather a nuisance to the inhabitants, the excitement keeping them out of their beds till such unholy hours as nine o'clock, and bringing people to walk about the streets in the daytime and disturb the quiet. Apart from its name—which is, I suppose, from the same Norse root as 'fell'—there can be no doubt of its antiquity; even if you were not told how William the Conqueror founded the church at Guibray, and shown the chamber in which he was born, the old town would impress you with the feeling

that it had been quietly settled down amongst its orchards from all time, and that it is likely to stop there, without any material alteration, until the crack of doom. Go into the market place at night, and it must strike you as being the very original from which all operatic scenes of the kind have been indirectly copied: there are the old overhanging houses with their gables sharply defined against the summer sky, and the narrow streets going off in crooked directions: there is the fountain plashing in the middle of the place; and, above all, there is the portal of St. Gervais with the tall cross on its steps, and the dim windows and turrets looking so pictorial, that one almost expects to see the windows light up and to hear the organ and the voices from within, and that presently the doors will roll back, and the procession come down the steps, to meet the chorus attired as gipsies, or peasants, or soldiers, who must be walking in these dark streets somewhere. And if, as when I first saw it, the moon should be rising behind the old church tower, you will own that there are worse places for a quiet evening smoke than Falaise market-place.

I was awakened next morning by a sound of chanting in the street, as if one priest and an acolyte were going by, and trying to do duty for a procession; and getting up to look, was just in time to see another small boy, in a cassock and cotta, wander past in a casual sort of way, a good deal more interested in a string of passing horses than in the coming service. The country folk were coming in by the dozen, some

with one horse, others with a whole drove, and, as we stood at the door waiting for breakfast, the scene reminded me irresistibly of Rosa Bonheur's picture ; especially when one magnificent grey stallion came by, tossing his head and flinging out his heels, as if he knew he was the pride of the fair and deserved the scarlet ribbons with which his master had decked him out. A demand for a substantial breakfast rather mystified the waiter, who evidently thought it was not yet the proper hour for anything more satisfying than *café au lait*, still he condescended to our weakness, and having finished, we started off to Guibray to see what was to be seen. On the whole I was a little disappointed ; the entry of the different animals into the town was about the best part of the sight. Still, there was something picturesque about the old square with its varied assemblage of horses, proprietors, and purchasers ; it was a bustling scene as the owners trotted their beasts backwards and forwards between the barriers, and many of the grey cart horses were magnificent fellows, but there did not seem to be any great number of other breeds. This probably accounted for the absence of the jockey element which struck us ; there were not more than a dozen of men who looked like grooms, and, stranger still, I saw not a single gipsy, whereas, one would have expected to meet a good many on such an occasion. When we were tired of the fair we went into the old church of Guibray, said to have been founded by William the Conqueror. It must have been a fine building origin-

ally, but is defaced by the hideous Grecian apse and decorations. The group apparently intended to represent the Assumption could hardly be beaten for an example of bad taste. The next thing to be done was to visit the castle, Mont Mirail, and the two more celebrated churches of Falaise proper. This involved a walk of about a mile, for the scene of the fair is still where it was originally established by Duke Robert when Guibray was an outlying village, although streets now connect both places. On the way to the castle the first object of much interest is the church of la Ste. Trinité, on the left-hand side. Architects, I believe, do not admire the building on account of its being of too late a period; but to the unprofessional eye its florid decorations are far from unpleasant, and the Lady Chapel is especially beautiful. Some of the windows, too, contain good stained glass; but what struck me most agreeably about the church was the absence of those tawdry artificial flowers which are so offensive upon the altars of Roman Catholic churches as a general rule. Every altar had real fresh flowers, as if the people were fond of la Ste. Trinité, and took pains to make it look well. Close at hand we passed the rather theatrical statue of the Conqueror, and turning up a side path came to the gate of the castle, where we were joined by the concierge, a sour-looking man of about fifty, who seemed to have a grievance. However, he changed by degrees, and at last was completely melted by our involuntary exclamations of delight on reaching the top of the Tour Talbot, and

seeing the whole panorama of the town and surrounding country. Falaise and its surroundings were the articles of his creed. He did believe in their perfection, as he must have been blind if he had not, but he certainly believed in very little else, except cider. He was perhaps the most cynical infidel I ever met, and gave his views on church matters with considerable freedom. The worst crime of the priests in his eyes appeared to be that they charged so much for tolling the passing bell, which he considered to be an unnecessary luxury.

The castle must have been almost impregnable in old days, though Henri Quatre managed to storm it by the breach, still shown above the Val d'Anté; the walls are still wonderfully perfect, and the little chapel of the twelfth century, within their enclosure, is in daily use. But the keep is little more than a shell, the rooms being crossed by a bridge of one beam, rather disturbing to visitors troubled with vertigo. At the end of this is the cell, shown as the Conqueror's birth-place; and at the side of this modest apartment, a window from which, as the conductor gravely assures you, Robert first saw Arlette washing at the pool below, and was smitten with her charms—in which case he must have possessed a remarkably sharp eye for a pretty woman, or else the invention of telescopes has been post-dated. It is worth looking out of the window, though, for the view of Mont Mirail, the scene of Henry the Fifth's assault, is better seen from that point than even from the winding path below the walls. In the Tour Talbot there are, in the centre of the different

rooms, round holes, one on each floor, which are commonly called the *oubliettes*; it being of course highly probable that obnoxious company in an upper storey would be thrown through into the next apartment, to be passed on by anybody who happened to be sitting there ! Conceive the dismay of a banqueting party at seeing a gory corpse fall plump from the ceiling on the dinner table, and the forced gaiety of everybody after it had been crammed under the festive board so as to tumble through the next hole. I suppose they were really apertures for the smoke to ascend by in the winter time ; as for the shaft at the side of the tower, Viollet Le Duc has pointed out what *that* was meant for in mediæval buildings.

St. Gervais was the next point in our pilgrimage, but the interior did not satisfy the expectation raised by the exterior. Still it has the grand look which distinguishes all these Norman churches, from their great height as compared with their breadth, and the massive look of the simple arches. A young priest was teaching a class of boys in the sacristy, and, judging from their laughter, was a sensible school-master, who knew how to teach children. This completed the round of sights, and we were not sorry to sit down to a hearty meal at the Grand Cerf, before taking the diligence which was to transport us to Caen.

Apropos of the drive to the last-named town, I cannot help remarking upon the extraordinary taste of people who depreciate the scenery of Nor-

mandy, and describe the roads as monotonous! To be sure these are principally straight, but they are all pleasant to look at, and many of them strikingly beautiful. Certainly, if people dislike driving down an avenue, they may object to the turf-bordered ways, with their fringe of poplars and acacias, but such travellers must be rather hard to please. When one hears of the incessant lines of poplars, the mind naturally figures to itself a place like a cemetery, with Lombardy poplars all along the side of the way, which would be dismal enough; but surely the aspen and the black poplar are pleasant trees? Of such roads as that by the firwoods between Bayeux and St. Lo I do not speak, no one in their senses could affirm that similar spots were monotonous. Sameness does not constitute monotony, unless it be sameness of a disagreeable type.

In truth, the more I saw of Normandy, the greater became my admiration of that sweet country. It seems to me to embrace within itself districts which reproduce the more striking features of all the English southern and midland counties. There is the down scenery on the coast; there are the apple orchards and water meadows further inland, where you might fairly imagine yourself to be in the valley of the Avon or the Trent, while for splendid wood and water views the country between Flers and Caen rivals Devonshire. Indeed, there is one place, Bercy Pont D'Ouilly, in that district which has not, in my opinion, its equal even in the last-named English

county. Of the Seine it is needless to speak, since everybody admits that at least to be beautiful.

We were the only passengers on the banquette, and consequently came in for all the attention of the driver, a wonderful talker. Now, Norman French is difficult enough to read, but when it comes to keeping up a conversation in that highly respectable jargon, as spoken with much volubility by the Norman peasantry, this involves a fatiguing course of mental gymnastics. First, you have to understand what is said, and then to make yourself decently intelligible in reply. And it is no use understanding ordinary 'French of Paris,' nor speaking it ever so fluently,—it is as if a Frenchman well versed in the English of polite society were to attempt to talk with a Cumberland farmer! If you speak tolerably fluent French, your case is rather worse than if you had none, for the people at once assume that of course you understand their lingo, which they doubtless consider perfection, and give themselves up to the delights of conversation, in which they expect you to join at a hand gallop. And until you learn that 'moy' means 'moi,' and so forth, it is a little puzzling.

However, the drive came to an end, and we crashed, rolled, bumped into Caen in the twilight, by no means sorry to exchange the banquette for our own legs, and—yes, at last!—to find ourselves at the door of the long sought Hôtel des Voyageurs.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM CAEN TO BAYEUX AND ST. LO.

HAVING arranged for the night's accommodation, we started out for a preliminary stroll round the town, and stopping for a moment to admire the beautiful spire of St. Pierre, proceeded to explore some of the neighbouring streets; but it was getting too dark for any close inspection of the quaint houses, and at last, feeling rather hungry, we dived, out of curiosity, into a small shop, which proclaimed itself as a place where '*On donne à boire et à manger*,' and sat down. It was rather a cut-throat looking place; however, there were two of us, and it was tolerably clean, so we supped on cold mutton and cider, and strolled back to the Hotel des Voyageurs. We found the little café belonging thereto occupied only by a family party, consisting of M. Martin, the proprietor, a remarkably intelligent man of about forty, his wife, a good-looking woman, some years younger, two small children, and an older woman, who sat sewing in a corner. The children, especially the younger, were pretty merry little fellows, and evidently great pets, dividing their parents' affection with the kitten, so we all soon became great friends, and settled down for a comfortable chat.

It struck me forcibly then, as it often had done in a minor degree, that we are, as a nation, in the habit of pronouncing a very false judgment when we accuse the French generally of a want of domesticity. Probably the charge arises from a habit of generalizing from the manners of Paris and the few large centres which, in a majority of instances, represent France in the mind of foreigners. But let anyone mix with the inhabitants of the country towns, or with the peasantry, and I think that a dispassionate observation of their manners will lead to a different conclusion. For my own part, it appears to me that the members of families affect each other's society in their hours of recreation, and show a feeling which would be an unheard-of thing in a corresponding grade of British life. What is commoner than to see father, mother, and child taking the air together in the public gardens or elsewhere, or a whole family party enjoying themselves at one of the little cafés. It is true that they do not all stop at home, and bore each other to death, which is too often our national idea of domestic happiness: their household arrangements would not permit of that, even if a prim, stuffy parlour were preferable as a rendezvous to the open air, or a cheerful restaurant. Perhaps this may be one reason why their spirits do not suffer so much as ours do!

We had not been talking long, when the door opened, a familiar voice was heard, and enter our old Israelite acquaintance, much gratified at meeting

us again. He had washed his face, and felt prepared to enjoy society, and it was not long before the conversation turned upon that all absorbing topic of interest, the German occupation of Lorraine and Alsace. As on other similar occasions, I listened curiously to hear what was the popular feeling upon the subject, and found, as invariably proved to be the case, that there was a determination of temporary submission to the inevitable, but an equal determination sooner or later to redress the grievance. It might be many years, but eventually France should have her own again—that was the burden of the national lament. The landlord becoming excited, gave vent to his feelings by the poetical expression that one might have pardoned the indemnity, ‘that one might heal, *it was a silver wound*,’ but never the loss of a province. In their talk, in their songs—and that is significant, as Fletcher of Saltoun knew—the same sentiments prevail, at least in Normandy.

The next morning was as fine as had become the rule of the weather, although dismal rumours had reached us of the state of things in England, and we started betimes for the Abbaye aux Dames, or L’Hôpital, as it is more commonly called. The first view of the church, ascending the hill on which it stands, strongly recalled St. Alban’s, although much smaller, but there is the same general effect of solid magnificence in the two western Norman towers and the long nave. The latter is, as usual, free to all comers, but for inspection of the more special portions

of the church we had to apply to the concierge at the Hôtel Dieu, close by. He handed us over to a tidy intelligent girl, who conducted us through the various chapels, and the crypts, and lifted aside the curtain which covered the gate of the nun's choir, to show us the interior, and the tomb of the founder, Queen Matilda. This stands in the centre, and now again encloses the Queen's remains, which were torn from their resting-place by the Huguenots, in one of those little outbreaks of pious fervour which it is so easy to ignore when it is desirable to blacken the reputation of the Catholics! Of course, there was no admission, as some of the sisters were at prayers. The crypt underneath, of the eleventh century, was formerly the nuns' burying-place; that also has suffered from the ravages of bigotry, but as its plain columns gave less opportunity for a smash, it has escaped comparatively scatheless. Thence we were conducted over the hospital, which is a model of what such places should be, with large, clean, airy wards, and pleasant views from its windows. It is most fortunately situated in this respect, as from its lofty position you have a panorama of the whole town and surrounding country, with the Orne winding down between wooded banks to the sea. In the women's ward it gave one a moment's shock to see a corpse laid out upon the first bed, but no one seemed to mind it. The garden in which the convalescent patients were basking in the sun, was equally pleasant and well kept with the rest of the place, and it was refreshing to see the

tender care with which an old *religieuse* was propping up a woman who was being taken out for her first breath of fresh air in a Bath chair. Our conductor was loth to receive anything for her attentions; so leaving something for the sick inmates, we bade her good-bye, and after vainly trying to get into the little neighbouring church of St. Gilles, betook ourselves to the most important sight in Caen, the church of St. Etienne, built by the Conqueror for his own burying-place, and now once more the receptacle of his few remains.

In many respects St. Etienne impressed me more than any other church which we saw during our short tour. It cannot, it is true, bear comparison for elaborate beauty with Bayeux, nor has it the height of Coutances, nor the wonderful proportions of St. Ouen; but there is something about its stern grandeur which impresses the mind in a way which none of the others can do: it strikes you as being exactly the place in which such a man as William would choose to pray to the God of battles, where the thick walls and heavy arches would seem home-like, as if they had belonged to one of his own fortresses. At the same time, beauty is by no means wanting: the architect would take care of that! The triforium is worth going all the way there to see. A decent man, of about fifty, came forward to accompany us, and proved to be an agreeable companion; he was in his way a local Dryasdust, and could give information worth having. In the

reminiscences of his youth overpowered the impressions of the capital; and it is striking to see him revert in the Sposalizio to some of the characteristic features of his earlier style. This altar-piece, which did not find its way back to Italy after the peace of Tolentino, is now in the museum of Caen, in Normandy, and represents the life size Virgin and St. Joseph united by the high priest, in presence of two carefully parted groups of men and women in front of an octagon temple. The composition is a modification of the Delivery of the Keys at the Sixtine, and is open to the same grave objections. It is remarkable that an arrangement which places the foreground persons on one line, those of the middle distance on a second, and the temple on a third, showing the complete elevation of all three with empty spaces between them, should have been copied with such fidelity by Raphael in his adaptation of 1504. But Raphael remained an Umbrian in feeling and habits till he visited Florence, and had a fair excuse for repeating a conventional subject, whereas Perugino might have remembered how grandly the same theme had been treated by Domenico Ghirlandaio in the choir of S. M. Novella at Florence. With this exception, the Sposalizio of Caen is worthy of Vannucci.* Its bright and harmonious colour is light and transparent, and marks a place in his progress to perfection in the technical system of oil; but his forms are less pliant than of old; and his tints have not the glow that charms in some of the pictures of the earlier Florentine period. The whole bears the impress of his own hand, which the double altar-piece of the Minorites of St. Francesco al Monte does not.'

But it was time to start for Bayeux, if we meant to arrive there at any reasonable hour, and we walked off accordingly. There is nothing very striking on the eighteen miles' walk, beyond its being through pleasant corn fields, which in these parts seemed to take the place of the apple orchards. On the road we stopped for a drink of cider at a little wayside auberge, kept by a meditative lady,

* Pietro Vannucci, called Perugino, born at Città della Pieve A.D. 1446, died at Fontignano A.D. 1524.

who was curious as to our personal history. Having assured her that we were not Alsatians, but Scotch, she spent the rest of our stay in walking thoughtfully out of one room into the other, accompanying her steps by a low recitative, addressed apparently to the cat, the burden of which was 'Sont Ecossais.' I don't think she had the faintest idea where the outlandish home of such people might be, and it evidently interested her much in the same way that the Japanese or the Shah did the lower orders in this country.

At length, in the twilight, we came suddenly into a street, and began to look for the Hôtel Achard, to which we were particularly recommended by our late host. And here let me remark that, as a general rule, it is safest not to rely too strongly upon such recommendations, but to hunt out a decent looking place for yourself. The only occasions upon which we paid exorbitantly for our accommodation were when we went, 'by particular request,' to the Hôtel Achard at Bayeux, and to the Hôtel de France at Rouen. At the latter place, indeed, although we were fleeced, we got something good for our money, but oh, the horrors of the former! The dinner raised awful doubts, inasmuch as the fish recalled the celebrated banquet at Mrs. Todgers's, and was not 'pleasant.' However, we were in for it; so we went out for a stroll, and soon forgot our fears in the delights of the quaint old town. The streets are positively full of houses, out of the door and

windows of which Chicot might steal, or Esmeralda peep, and you half expect to come upon Quasimodo round the corner, going down to the cathedral to look after the bells, whose carillon drops through the silence. For Bayeux was 'as still as the grave or Peebles;' everybody was either gone or going to bed, with the exception of a few choice spirits who were playing cards in the garden of a little café, and even they revelled in a fitful sort of way, and under their breath as it were. By the time we had finished our coffee, and once more reached our inn, even that house was shut up, and the door was opened discontentedly by the proprietor, who made no secret of the fact that he was sitting up for us—upon which the clock struck ten. That old man was, to do him justice, the one redeeming feature of his hotel; he had plenty of local information, and gave it in an intelligent manner; but I fancy he was 'sair hadden doun' by his hard-featured *mégère* of a wife or daughter, who looked as if she owned a manufactory of verjuice in the neighbourhood, and lived on the damaged stock!

All night long, at waking intervals, the carillon came faintly from the cathedral tower, repeating a fragment of some forgotten hymn in a thoughtful way, as if the tune were dying out from the memory even of the bells. And in the morning we walked out, to the same accompaniment, to find the streets as busy as they could manage to be in such a place, and went to breakfast in the pretty garden of the

café; no more meals at the Hôtel Achard, thank you! The roses and oleanders were sweeter surroundings both to the eye and the nose than that frowsy *salle à manger*, and we fondly hoped to diminish what I dimly foresaw would be the length of the bill. Alas for human hopes! When we *did* return and pay it, it was just about double what we paid anywhere else for twice the amount of accommodation. Probably there are other and better hotels in Bayeux; on that point I cannot speak, having discovered our error when too late; all I say to intending tourists is '*Don't* go to the Hôtel Achard.'

I cannot give a learned dissertation on the cathedral, because I do not know enough about architecture, but it requires nothing more than an eye for beauty to induce one to stop there as long as possible. The only fault about the building seemed to me to be that it looks, from some points, rather as if it were set down upon the earth; this is not the case, however, upon the south, where steps and the natural declivity of the street remove that appearance. And, if it be true, as is stated, that there are traces of former building beneath the present road level, the church must originally have stood sufficiently above its immediate surroundings to give it what the west front now seems to want. . Apart from the dimensions of the building, the carving of the stones is more lavish than usual, and the walls of the nave are particularly interesting; they are ascribed to the

twelfth century, and curiously resemble wattled osiers, in a manner which bears out the theory that early northern architecture was, in its first stages, a reproduction of the forms of buildings constructed from wood and kindred materials by the forest dwellers. The crypt seems to be the earliest part of the church, and contains some quaint old frescoes (attributed to the eighth century by the sacristan, although that part of the building can hardly be older than the latter part of the eleventh) and columns whose rudely sculptured capitals recall the carving at Iona; here again are mournful signs of what the Huguenots could do when they had a fancy. There are also traces of the Vandalism of a later age, in the remains of the great *jubét*, or singing gallery, which formerly stood at the entrance of the choir. Some wiseacres discovered, about forty years ago, that this spoilt the general view of the cathedral, and pulled it down; of course it never occurred to them that it might possibly be included in the original plan of the building, and great was their dismay when they discovered that, as in the parallel case of Chichester, the tower was likely to follow suit. So that had to come down also, and when it was rebuilt parsimony came to the assistance of stupidity, and instead of finishing it properly, the builders must needs put on a neat, cheap, light copper roof; and a nice mess they have made of it altogether! Of course, we ascended the tower, and equally of course wished ourselves safe at the bottom before we were half

way up; still the view was worth the climb as long as you did not feel too sick to look at it. Here again, on casting the eye over the older parts of Bayeux, we were struck with the homely look of the places; many of the houses might have been in Stirling, with their stone walls and steep grey roofs.

When we came out, we must go to the Bibliothèque and see the tapestry, as in duty bound; so that was duly inspected. It cannot but occur to one that Queen Matilda, or whoever was the real fabricant,* had queer notions on the subject of such things, only that she probably was not so silly as to call it tapestry at all. It is only since 1872 that Bayeux has possessed, owing to the handsome conduct of the South Kensington officials, a small piece of the original fabric which was stolen some sixty years ago by an Englishwoman, whose name is duly gibbeted in an inscription. Fancy any one being such a fool, apart from any other consideration! For she could not possibly show her prize to her friends, and it can hardly have been amusing to own it under such circumstances!

This completed our sight-seeing, as far as Bayeux was concerned, and we departed on our march to St. Lo, a distance of some twenty-five miles, gnashing our teeth over the bill, and prophesying an unpleasant

* M. Frederick Pluquet, than whom there could not be a better authority on the subject, considered that the tapestry was the work neither of the first nor the second Matilda, but executed by order of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, uterine brother of the Conqueror. See his *Essai Historique sur la Ville de Bayeux*.

future for Megæra, unless she paid more attention to the eighth commandment. This walk was the most beautiful of all ; through thick plantations of fir and ash nearly all the way, and at the last through orchards once more ; the perfume telling us in the dusk warm evening that there were stores of ripe fruit upon the apricot boughs. And so, in the hush of a summer's night we came down the steep road, and entered St. Lo. But that pleasantest of places demands a chapter all to itself.

CHAPTER V.

ST. LO.

WHOEVER, in the course of travel through Normandy, should wish for a quiet retreat, where he may for a short time escape from the rush of the world generally and the travelling world in particular, let him by all means direct his steps towards La Manche, and choose as his haven of rest the chief town of the department, St. Lo. The local capital does not sound a promising place to recommend as a desirable residence for those who seek retirement, but I can assure all who have not yet made experiment that they will not be disappointed. *Mutato nomine*, the old Scots proverb about Peebles, might with perfect fitness be applied to the representative town of La Manche ; and we might say, 'As quiet as the grave, or St. Lo.'

To begin with, the position of the place is entirely in its favour. Situated on a rock, which raises the beautiful cathedral and the few houses of the quaint old town into unusual prominence, St. Lo is surrounded on every side but one by deep orchard meadows, through which runs the little river, fringed with pink willow-weed and purple loosestrife, and dotted here and there, under the alder boughs, with great white water-lilies, which hardly move even in a breeze, as

they float on the still stream, too quiet for much hope to the trout fisher. Not but that there are plenty of fish; the fry positively swarm in the clear water, and, though nobody seems to catch any, there are splendid perch and roach to be had merely for throwing a line; whilst the inhabitants of the town tell wonderful tales of enormous pike. Where was there ever a country river without a traditional pike of supernatural dimensions? Then the rage for feathered head-dresses has not as yet reached unsophisticated St. Lo; and, consequently, the kingfisher still flashes up and down the stream, without fear of net or gun. And all around, the low hills, wooded to the top with pine, and fir, and poplar, rise up, and shut the outside world with its noise and bustle from disturbing the holy calm of the place. If I were a landscape painter, I think I would go and live there, especially if some beneficent Mæcenæ would bestow on me a moderate competency, which should allow of the purchase of a certain little old farm down by the river, with towers and turrets, and an old grey circling wall, from the orchard of which might be gained such a view of the town, with its spire-crowned rock, as should make intending purchasers jostle and fight in the ante-room of that gallery which might chance to be graced with its representation.

We arrived in the town, my companion and I, down the long road from Bayeux, just as the evening was closing in on the vigil of the Feast of the Assumption.

Therefore, it being August, the hour was not preposterously late ; but everybody had either gone to bed, or else was taking a farewell gossip at the door before turning in. On asking, with some faint misgivings, whether there was a hotel anywhere near, a comfortable dame, who seemed to be engaged in pointing out to her husband how sadly he had failed in his execution of the day's duties, volunteered a guide in the person of her small daughter, and under this young lady's escort we were shortly introduced, through a dark and yawning archway, into a large courtyard, across which was to be seen one faint glimmering light. Following up this indication of life, we knocked at a door, which was opened by a curly-headed highly-contemptuous boy, who apparently resented the enquiry as to whether this was the hotel. He was speedily brought to book, however, by his father, who entreated us to enter, and we found ourselves in a regular old-fashioned farmhouse kitchen, welcomed in choice Norman French by perhaps the jolliest-looking landlady that ever existed out of a comedy. She at once took us under her motherly protection, and prescribed supper as the first requisite, and gigantic sabots as the next, for those misguided people who had actually dared the tremendous voyage '*de Bayeux à pied !*' Into the said sabots one could comfortably have stuffed a change of linen, in which case they might have fitted ; but the supper was undeniable, and the short period which preceded its appearance in the adjoining room was

agreeably passed in washing at the sink, discussing the relative merits of Normandy, Scotland, and England, and in a slight philological dissertation arising out of the traditionally idiotic conversation-book, from which the landlord was vainly trying to acquire some knowledge of English. Eating finished and pipes just comfortably alight, enter our hostess, Madame Le Batteux, who courteously offered to sit up for her guests as long as they might desire, but plainly intimated that she wished we would go to bed, as in that case she would go also. I imagine it was already something like an hour later than her usual time for retiring. Matters were arranged by her promising to carry the brandy and water upstairs, and we were promptly ushered out of the house again into a second courtyard, at one side of which appeared a stone staircase, communicating on the outside with a side row of buildings ; up the staircase, and along a dark corridor, and we were in our bedroom. It contained four beds—do people ever make up parties, I wonder, for the enjoyment of repose?—and suggested the arrival of pilgrims, like Chaucer's. The window looked partly on to the roof of an adjoining outhouse, and partly commanded its interior, from whence there arose a healthy smell of new hay ; the roof itself slanted across our open casement, and over it was visible the opposite convent, as well as what turned out in daylight to be a garden. But everything was scrupulously clean and fresh ; the water supply was, it is true, not more abundant than in French inns generally, but, after all, was there not the

sink in the kitchen? On descending next morning, the whole family were discovered in festal array, going to mass, and inclined to be scandalized at our non-attendance; but Madame Le Batteux's religious scruples were quieted by the promise of appearance at vespers, and she set off for church and a subsequent day in the country, in high spirits and a bonnet like Mrs. Jarley's; in fact, she was very like Mrs. Jarley altogether. After breakfast we strolled down the street into the little *place* fronting the cathedral, and stayed awhile to see the two stern old Norman towers, with their spires soaring up into the spotless sky. Apart from the beauty which distinguishes all the great churches in this part of the world—the beauty of honest, simple, loving workmanship—there is not perhaps anything strikingly peculiar in the cathedral of St. Lo. The southernmost of the two towers would seem, by its more lavish embellishment, to be, at least in part, of later date than its companion, and the great western door must delight the artist's eye. In addition to this, the western or principal façade gains considerable dignity as a whole from the flight of steps by which it is approached. Though not equal to those at Lisieux, they prevent the church from giving that impression of being set down upon the ground, which somewhat detracts from the first view of the cathedral of Coutances, and even from that of Bayeux, although not to the same extent. One of the most curious points about the building is the little canopied stone pulpit on the exterior of the north side, which is no

longer used on any occasion, so far as we could ascertain. Inside, one can only say that the church is simple and beautiful; doubtless the eye of a practised architect would discover much upon which to write endless dissertations, but, to the non-professional visitor, the long lines of the lofty aisles and the stone-groined roof suggest only comparisons with other similar edifices—comparisons, be it said, resulting in no disparagement to the cathedral church of St. Lo. Only one thing strikes the eye forcibly here as elsewhere, viz., the absolute necessity in buildings of this description for a liberal use of good stained glass; without the aid of colour, the very sternness and simplicity, which are amongst their greatest merits, tend to a feeling of coldness in the *ensemble*, which is but partially relieved by the adornments—not always in the best of taste—of the many altars.

Across the *Place*, at the end of which is a stone balustrade fencing the summit of the rock, and forming apparently part of the old town wall, the road leads by a zig-zag down the face of the hill to the river, some of the houses having straggled down to the water's edge, where they stop abruptly as if the bridge were an impassable obstacle. Looking up from this point, it occurs to one that St. Lo, in common with several other Norman towns, must have been built with an eye to the probable attacks of enemies; if so, it was without doubt laid out most judiciously, always supposing that the attacking party would be accommodating enough to approach from the

sea coast ; but how, if they came, like ourselves, by way of Bayeux ? Perhaps it was the English who were chiefly expected, and they would be likely to come, then as now, from Granville or Avranches. For a few stray tourists do occasionally find their way into the new and deeply uninteresting streets which lie beneath the sleepy old town on its rock, for the purpose of going somewhere else as quick as possible by means of the railway which is hidden somewhere thereabouts. There are no dreams of invasion now up in quiet St. Lo ; even the all-pervading English seem to have left it to its quiet memories and its sunlight, and we meet nothing more formidable than a few rather weird old women as we pass the bridge, and take the river path beneath the hanging woods. Nobody seems to go that way, lovely as it is. Mass being over, the good people are presumably at *déjeuner*. So, after a stroll of some few hundred yards, we lie down upon the bank in the hot sunlight, and soon the heat and the gleaming water together combine to banish all fears of interruption by angry gendarmes, and we strip and plunge in—ah, such cool, clear water ! We can see the fishes as we swim, and neither they nor the birds seem to mind us any more than if we were some new kind of water plant. Then a lazy dressing and delicious repose on the grass, with pipes, and a desultory chapter from a book taken out of the pocket—no less a companion than the immortal ‘Mort d’Arthur,’ and no less an episode therein than that which tells *How a young man came into the court of King Arthur*,

and how Sir Kay called him in scorn *La Cote Mal Taile*, and of the damsel Maledisaunt, and of Lancelot's courtesy, and of the new knight's worthy powers. And so we fall a-musing with half-shut eyes in the sunlight, and over the meadows comes the sound of the bells chiming for vespers, and at last we get up and saunter slowly homewards. St. Lo has got to be 'home' already; some quiet spots on this earth have that faculty of soon winding themselves about our lives.

As we enter the *Place*, vespers are just over—luckily, Madame Le Batteux will not be back till very late, and there will be no time for awkward enquiries—and as the great doors of the church roll back, there is a sound of chanting, and there come gleams of cloth of gold, for a procession is starting to perambulate and bless the town. It would be impossible to imagine a scene more picturesque, more dramatic, and at the same time more perfectly in fitness and keeping with the time and the surroundings. All up the steps and through the *Place* were ranged the peasants in holiday attire, the trim white caps and the blouses making together Mary's own colours; and as the great cross went by with the sweet white cloud rolling up before it, each head was bowed for a moment, and the organ boomed from within, and the bells clashed in the outside glare, with nothing to rival their sounds saving the chanting of the robed priests, and the clear voices of the answering choristers; and so the pomp swept on, while the face of the patroness smiled down from

the folds of the banner, as if indeed she blessed her simple votaries. Then, in a little while, all flocked into the church, ablaze with lights and crowded with a kneeling multitude, to Benediction—that most touching of all the services which the Latin branch of the Church has provided for her children. And now, for the first time, I fully understood what was the influence which—not Rome, but their own hearts—brought to bear upon so many some years ago. Used all their lives to pewed, musty churches, which were locked up all the week to be opened on Sundays only for the recitation of ‘Dearly beloved brethren,’ enlivened by the graceful strains of Tate and Brady, is it strange if, coming abroad, and there, for the first time, seeing such a service as was this of the Benediction—beautiful in its externals, and heart-moving in the earnestness of its attendants—they fancied that Utopia was found, and took the leap in the dark? It must needs be a very unsympathetic heart that can rest unmoved in such a scene, or fail to swell to the strains of the music as the ‘*Tantum ergo*’ rolls down the long aisles of the church, and the bell rings before the altar.

After service we strolled back to the hospitable doors, or rather courtyards, of the Hôtel de la France. We were the only guests, by the by, and Marie, who had been left at home to keep house, and who was not in the sweetest of tempers accordingly, welcomed us with enthusiasm as a slight relief to the monotony of her situation, and at once proposed dinner, an arrangement to which we gladly acceded, occupying the time

of preparation in writing letters. To do Marie justice, she treated us admirably ; perhaps she wanted to impress upon us that the presence of madame was not absolutely indispensable to the well-being of her guests. After dinner, a stroll down to the balustrade at the end of the *Place*, where the landscape was looking even lovelier in the twilight than it had seemed in the morning, and so back again betimes. Marie's temper was getting rapidly worse ; she was beginning to find herself sadly fatigued, and suffering from sore feet, though what on earth she can have had to do all day, except to cook our dinner, it would be difficult to guess. So we fled to the safety of our own room, to dream of meadows, and tall spires, and bells, till it was time to wake up again, and take the road to Coutances.

Madame Le Batteux was even gayer next morning than before ; she must have snubbed her domestic in a manner most satisfactory to herself, and dismissed us almost with her blessing—a courtesy which we felt disposed to reciprocate when we looked at the amount of her bill. I hope she makes her hotel answer ; but if everyone gets off as easily as we did, I confess to some misgivings on the subject.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM ST. LO TO COUTANCES, GRANVILLE, AND FLERS,
BACK TO CAEN AND LE HÂVRE.

THE road from St. Lo to Coutances, a distance of about eighteen miles, runs through pretty rolling country, and finally, passing up a tolerably steep hill between rows of trees, sweeps round into the town, which is situated upon the summit and the opposite slope. Here for the first time we encountered a smart shower on the way, but by the time Coutances was reached the weather was as fine as ever ; we passed up the main street on our way to the Post Office, and taking mental stock of the various hotels. I decided at once that we would not go to the gloomy looking house called the Hôtel d'Angleterre ; but before we could come to any decision as to where we *would* go, a fresh-looking young waiter had pounced upon us from the Hôtel de France on the other side of the way, and demanded our custom, whilst the landlady, a buxom person, stood in the doorway waving entreatingly to us to enter. Of course this was not to be borne by the rival house, who despatched a grimy looking porter to advance the claims of that establishment ; but we shook off both as we thought, and got safely past the cathedral and into the office. Conceive our astonishment

the Public Garden, which is very tastefully laid out. How long would it be before the authorities in our own country thought it necessary, or even desirable to lay out a similar recreation ground in a town the size of Coutances. The remains of the aqueduct, *Les Piliers*, as they are called, are close by, that is to say the ivy, which presumably contains them.

We had fully intended to push on next day, but it turned out wet, and walking was out of the question, the only chance was to take the diligence either to Avranches or Granville. We selected the former and sent to engage places, but about an hour after the time of departure, Pierre, the waiter who had first encountered us, calmly announced that the diligence had gone some time, and that there was no room; so we could only wait till three and go to Granville by the conveyance which started at that hour. However, with the help of billiards, writing, and reading the time passed. We got a good deal of amusement from watching the manners and customs of the hotel, as we sat under the verandah in the court-yard, especially when a carriage or a diligence arrived. It was a case of 'Hark, I hear the sound of coaches.' We might have been in Gil Blas' cavern. No sooner did Auguste, who commanded the band, catch the faintest sound of bells or wheels, than with a wild cry of '*A la voiture !*' he rushed to the archway of the yard, while from different doorways excited

waiters sped to his assistance, and surrounded the vehicle. Once I went out to see the sequel: the diligence was in the street with the horses taken out, the luggage was strewed on the ground, and the passengers and waiters shrieking, gesticulating, and running up and down; it would have made a first-rate picture of the coach 'stopped by highwaymen or bandits. When it was over, each waiter returned to his lair till the warning cry was once more heard, and then 'same business.'

The road to Granville is fine during the first portion, where it ascends the hills, and as far as Brèhal, about half-way; after that there is not much interest. True, it was pouring with rain and one could hardly judge fairly of how it might look on a fine day. We had for company some countrymen who were returning from market, fine stalwart fellows, as indeed is the case with the Norman peasantry generally. One of them evidently represented the comic and musical talent of the neighbourhood, and sang all the way, his special favourites being *Clair de la lune*, and a song addressed to the Germans, which was enthusiastically chorused. Both words and air were above the average merit of such ephemeral songs, but we could not find out if they were by any known composer.

As soon as we had descended through the streets of Granville, we went to a little out-of-the-way inn, recommended by good Madame Legout, and secured a

room. The house was called the Hôtel de Londres, kept by La veuve Jolivet, who was I fancy a poor relation of our late hostess. It was rather in the 'poor but scrupulously clean' style, but cleanliness and civility were both present. The food, if rather coarser than at an inn of more standing, was good, plentiful, and well dressed, and the charges were very small. La veuve Jolivet herself was a depressed woman, completely under the tyranny of a masterful old woman, her mother apparently, who did not think much of her, and of a minx, her daughter, who had an equally low opinion of us, which she took no pains to conceal. She evidently felt that she was born for higher things than serving 'vagrom men.' It poured with rain till the road was like a river, and in despair of other diversion we forded the street, and plunged into a *café chantant*. That was perhaps the most miserable hour we ever spent! I have heard the Christy Minstrels, Herr Wachtel, and the Great Vance, but for dullness, noise, and vulgarity, all three combined could not hold a candle to the company at the café at Granville! 'Lucie, comique,' was sufficiently trying. She was dressed all in green satin, and did the Thérèse business; but when M. et Madame Desvilliers came on to sing a dialogue song it was too much; we knew they would come round with the hat presently, as they did after every song, and not having a button to drop in it, according to Dr. Holmes's prescription, we fled. It was a comfort, though, to find that British music halls have their counterparts abroad, and that we

are not singular in our national taste for being bored in our hours of idleness.

Fortunately the next day was very fine again, or I don't know what we should have done; as it was, we could hardly kill time. Circumstances had forced us to alter our original plans and return at once to Le Havre, so our intention was now to leave by the train at 4 p.m., and, sleeping at Flers, to reach Caen the next day, from whence we could catch the boat. All we had to do in the interim was to get through the hours somehow. Some idiot has said that Granville is a miniature Gibraltar! Perhaps it may be, wanting the Rock, the interest, and the gaiety. It suggested to our minds a mixture of Ramsgate, Broadstairs, and Deal, with the ugliness of the first, the stupidity of the second, and the dirt of the third. The women are said to be beautiful: I can only suppose, therefore, that the native Granvillaises had all gone out for the day; and as for the local costume about which writers make such a fuss, it is simply a black cloak like a waterproof wrap! The sands would be tolerable if it were not for the bathing arrangements, but who on earth can enjoy a swim when you have to wade out in a costume suggestive of the flying trapeze! And as for swimming in it, just try what you can do dressed in clown fashion!

Still, the time wore away, and we took our tickets, being adroitly swindled, in the hurry, by the lady who presided at the office, and got into a carriage.

It was quite full, and two of the occupants were Yankees who spoke not a word of French, whence trouble arose. It was perhaps as well that I met those men—or rather one of them, for the younger was unobjectionable—or I might have gone through life believing that the American nation had been maligned, and that the ‘rowdy’ was a fiction of the novelist’s brain. Having met many charming and highly refined Northerners and Southerners, and having contracted warm friendships with some of the latter, my ideas were taken from their manners and habits. But of all the disgusting, vulgar, foul-mouthed beasts that ever existed, that man was the worst you can conceive! Soon he bethought himself that it would be a pleasing device to announce that he was a Prussian; in a moment the carriage was up in arms, but one would-be peacemaker exclaimed ‘*Ah, vous blaguez!*’ ‘A *blackguard* am I!’ screamed the ruffian, and could hardly be appeased. The cap fitted, I must say. There had not been an actual fight when we got to Flers, but there is no saying what may have happened in the course of the night.

Coming through the gate of the station, out of the thick darkness there strode an evil looking man in a blouse, who asked if we wanted a good hotel. There was no alternative, as we knew nothing of the place, but to accompany him up the road, until he knocked at the door of a stone house. It was opened, revealing a dimly lighted room, where

three men were drinking and talking in low tones at one table, whilst a woman sewed by the light of a tallow candle at another. It was horribly suggestive of the scene in some old burlesque where a traveller asking 'Can I have a bed here?' is met with the reply 'You can!—and a ger-rave!' (*sotto voce*). However, it was late, and there were two of us. We turned aside into the kitchen, where three women and two men were supping off garlic, and agreed to stay the night. Another dip was produced, and some tolerable brandy, and soon we went through the kitchen again, up the common stair, and into a decent bed-room. Here the plot thickened—the door would not latch; up came one of the women who explained that this was a well-known fact, and that a lady who slept there last night had experienced it. (Where might not that poor lady be sleeping now!) The door fastened at last, and we were safe, but I must needs try it, and, pop, it came open and wouldn't shut again. Matters were getting worse—a clatter of sabots, and enter a man this time, who looked at the lock and said he would fetch aid. Well, the window was not far from the ground, and we felt pretty strong in the arms, so he was allowed to summon an accomplice, and with many bangs and upheavings of the door, it fastened at last, and we went shuddering to bed. As our throats were whole in the morning, we had breakfast, and went to see if there was anything worth looking at in Flers. There was nothing startling, but the old

church was quaint in its ugliness, and the new one very pretty and in admirable taste—the capitals of the pillars really show great artistic feeling. I think they must have had a sheep given to them at our inn, and were serving it up to the customers, but they cooked the different parts well notwithstanding. *Apropos* of the *chasse*, let me warn folk against cider brandy, it is exactly like sweet spirits of nitre!

The railway journey from Flers to Caen is, as I have already said, through scenery of the loveliest description. It would be idle to try and give any adequate notion of it in words; the most I can say is that it reminded me of the North Devon line on a large scale. So we once more reached Caen, and betook ourselves again to the hospitable Hotel des Voyageurs, to be cordially welcomed like old friends by M. Martin and his good-looking wife. There was no particular incident attending our stay that day; it was showery, and we did a little more sightseeing—especially the church of St. Jean, for the sake of the windows; but when evening drew in, and we had settled down for a chat, a subject of interest was introduced to our notice, viz., the next day's pilgrimage. There was to be a great gathering at the little shrine of La Delivrande near Luc, about 12 miles off, to celebrate the anniversary of the presentation of a rich crown to the image of the Blessed Virgin, and votaries were pouring into the town from all quarters,—beds being consequently at a premium,

and Madame Martin nearly beside herself in arranging for the various wants of the pilgrims. The great difficulty was to remember when they were to be waked, as some wanted to get up at four and others not till nine, whilst the remainder were to be called at various hours ranging between the two. The poor woman sat with her book, alternately consulting her husband and the waiter, both of whom made great fun of her, she being *dévoté* and they strongly inclined to scepticism. Every now and then the husband would come out with some scandalous little anecdote about the priests and their ways, obviously invented for the occasion, at each of which Madame, with a shriek of indignant surprise, turned to assure us that the story was a *canard*; then she lost her place in the book and had to begin again. At last she got into a hopeless muddle over three different *curés*; one was to be roused at four, a second at five, and respecting the third there were no instructions. In despair she cut the Gordian knot, by giving orders that he also should be called at four, which must have been very pleasant for him if he did not mean to get up till a rational hour! '*Eh bien!*' quoth she, '*qu'on réveille le bon homme à quatre heures!*' As we had to catch the boat at eight o'clock, we wished to rise at six, and went off to bed early accordingly; but we had better have sat up, for sleep was out of the question! What those pilgrims did I cannot

imagine, but till one in the morning they kicked up the most abominable row that was ever heard in a decent house. We were told next morning that 2000 arrived in the town after ten o'clock, and they might all have been keeping it up down-stairs by the noise they made. They laughed, they talked, they screamed, they did everything but sing; then they came up stairs, dragging boxes after them, to judge by the sounds, then somebody fell down again, then they rattled at our door, fell over the boots, and rambled up and down the corridors. If they had not been devotees, I should have said they were all drunk. About one they all got settled, and then a man and woman began to black boots in the court, and to talk to each other across the yard. This entertainment lasted till nearly two, and at four o'clock the réveillée began. There was little fear of our oversleeping ourselves; but I did wish that I had been the priest who conducted that party to Luc! Wouldn't I have picked out the stony places for their pilgrimage! As we hurried down to the quay, the vehicles were pouring out of the town, with an air of junketing about them which recalled Hampton races more than anything, though no doubt the inmates were all perfectly sincere.

The ten mile passage down the Orne was disappointing; the banks are nicely wooded but have no strongly marked features. Then we had about

two hours of a fine smooth sea, and arrived in Le Havre about noonday, quite disposed to spend a few days quietly before starting for Rouen, which was to be our next jaunt.

CHAPTER VII.

LE HÂVRE TO ROUEN.

THERE is but one proper way of travelling from Le Havre to Rouen, if you wish to enjoy the journey, that is to take the little steamboat, the *Furet*, which runs between the two towns, occupying about six hours in the transit. The time of departure is always posted up on the pier, and the second class fare is only five francs, so that on a fine day a cheap view may be had of the finest part of the Seine. It is quite a mistake to take a first-cabin ticket, the accommodation being good throughout the vessel, and the company as good as any reasonable being need desire. Nothing could in its way be lovelier than the scenery. Some enthusiastic admirer has compared it to the West Highlands, which leads one to suppose that he never was there, and evolved his idea of the district from his own internal consciousness, as the German philosopher did the giraffe. Such a comparison is ridiculous, as the two places have no single thing in common. The Seine struck us as being much more like a magnified copy of the most beautiful parts of the Thames. Of course everything is on a much larger scale, but there are the same wooded banks and willow islands which delight the lovers of Cookham and Marlow, with the addition

of quaint little villages, and now and then a glimpse of some old chateau crowning one of the neighbouring heights. We had a splendid day for the trip, and I sat basking on the deck, alternately enjoying the heat and the view, and *Great Expectations*, which is rather a good travelling book. It is all nonsense to say one ought not to want a book in the midst of fine scenery. I don't believe anybody can honestly go on looking at scenery for six consecutive hours without something else to occupy his mind! One caution to those who travel by the *Furet*: if money be an object don't breakfast on board! They will treat you admirably, but you will have to pay for it through the nose! One most curious sight, which we watched for some time, was a shoal of tiny silvery fish, which kept on leaping out of the water, shooting along the surface, and disappearing; I fancy they must have been frightened by the dash of the paddles.

Apart from the pleasure to be derived from the trip up the Seine, it is by far the best way of approaching Rouen, the first view of the city from the river being most picturesque. Before starting we had been specially recommended by Madame Gorgy, herself a Rouennaise, to go to the Hôtel de France, where she said we were sure to be well treated; so, armed with her card, we started in quest of that hostelry before beginning to enjoy the sights of the city, and after some little search found it, a handsome house in the Rue des Carmes, built round a quadrangle, which was ornamented with flowering shrubs, and a green parrot,

heart of Richard Cour de Lion, and fortunately this is no longer a vain pilgrimage; the slightly sacrilegious antiquarianism which prompted the removal of the great king's heart has been atoned for, and the relic itself, brought back from the Musée des Antiquités in the year 1865, now rests in a handsome altar tomb in the south aisle; on the top lies the original statue of Richard, which was long deposited in a mutilated state, in the Lady Chapel—the chin and feet have been cleverly replaced, and it is as astonishing as gratifying to see what a strong likeness the old effigy bears to the picture which one has been accustomed, ever since the dreary days of 'Pinnock's Goldsmith,' to look upon as the true effigy of the Lion-heart. A corresponding tomb in the north aisle holds the body of the king's unhappy brother Henry; and in the Lady Chapel, on the left hand side is the resting place of an almost equally celebrated man, Louis de Brézé, husband of Diane de Poitiers. One feels a sense of grim humour, in remembering the beautiful Diana's history, upon seeing the weeping figure of herself with which she embellished the tomb, and reading the epitaph; infallibly there rises to one's mind Gertrude's remonstrance—'Methinks the lady doth protest too much!' We came out, with an admiring look upwards at the Butter Tower, and the tower of St. Romain, to be clutched by a stalwart Norman, who insisted upon taking us in tow, and showing us the city. French, patois, and language alike failed

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To the antiquarian or historical student, that part of Rouen which lies between Notre Dame and the river is the most interesting, inasmuch as it is the oldest, and has not yet been sacrificed to modern improvements. The great feature of the quarter is the old palace of the Dukes of Normandy. The building is essentially royal, just as the streets of Stirling are, and seems to stand amongst its surroundings with the same proud protest against the accidents of time that might have appeared in the face of Belisarius, or of Lord Kirkcudbright at his glove stall. They store oil—petroleum, possibly—in the *rez de chaussée*, and upstairs they hold the cloth market; but still the place is a palace, there is no doubt about that, and there is the very *mansarde* window out of which the sportful princes might have thrown dirty water upon their brother Robert, the earliest instance in modern history of a *gardyloo*. I am not quite sure, at this moment, whether that practical joke was played at Rouen, but I think it must have been, the window is so charmingly situated for sending a bucketfull right over anybody who might be standing on the step below!

The other great church at Rouen which everybody goes to see is St. Maclou. It would be rather a curious inquiry who this saint actually was. He died 15th November, A.D. 565, and had a cousin who was called St. Magloire. Now, although hagiologies say that he was a Welshman, they also say that he came to Brittany—where his name still lives, as St. Malo—from Ireland. Is it not possible that he was a Highlander, and that his name was either Macleod or Macloy? If the latter hypothesis be true, he must have been an Arran man, for all the Macloys were from that most beautiful island. They are “Fullarton” now, by some inexplicable transmutation of their name; but still Kilmichael is the patrimony of the children of that Macloy to whom the Bruce gave it for his faithful knight-service; and it is just open to question whether St. Molais, the patron saint of the island, who died in the seventh century, may not also have been of that family. The received origin of his name *Maol Issa*, i.e., the servant of Jesus, sounds suspiciously like a late derivation foisted upon a real patronymic. The church itself must have been most glorious before the exquisite taste of the last century expended itself upon decoration of the interior. At present, one flees shuddering from the gilt suns and cherubim that embellish every altar, to take refuge in an admiration of Jean Goujon’s wood-carving upon the doorway, and then one flees still more quickly from the beldam hovering up and down outside the church, to levy black mail from the decent and charitable, whilst she looks quite capable

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There is a curious point connected with Le Grand Horloge, which overhangs a narrow passage near the Palais de Justice, which does not seem to have been generally noted, viz., that it bears the ancient symbol of the lamb and flag, which would seem to refer the structure to some early foundation of the Templars, but there seems to be no tradition on the subject. The Palais de Justice itself is about as good an example as could be desired of what may be done by people who understand the true principles of restoration. The main building dates from the early part of the sixteenth century, yet one entire wing has been added within the last fifty years, which is in perfect harmony and keeping with the older portion, so wisely have the builders copied its details. Inside we found nothing specially worthy of admiration except the ceiling of the criminal court. It is not necessary to dilate upon the pictures in the Hôtel de Ville, where everyone who cares for good paintings will go to see the Peruginos, upon the Hôtel Bourgtheroulde, and other common sights of Rouen; are they not written in the chronicles of Murray? But there is one old house behind the Tour St. Andre, dating from the reign of Francis I., which none ought to miss, inasmuch as its carved wooden front is one of the most beautiful things I ever saw.

One of the principal sights in Rouen is, of course, the old tower in which, according to commonly-

whose temper had been soured by captivity. Let me at once remark that the Hôtel de France was an awful mistake. Not that there was anything to complain of in the apartments; the house was good, the people civil, the cookery undeniable, and some of the domestic arrangements, which I need not particularize, as good as in any private house in England—but the charges! For a double-bedded room, *au quatrième*, we paid at the rate of 9 francs a day, and everything else was to match. However, that was a discovery to come, and meanwhile we started to see St. Ouen before the *table d'hôte*.

It would not be of much use were I to attempt a detailed description of that most noble church. Others, both competent and incompetent, have done it before me, and after all it conveys but little to an unprofessional reader to say that the choir is of this century or the Lady Chapel of that; it is the effect upon each individual mind that has to be considered, apart from mere technical details. In St. Ouen it is the wonderful proportions of the building as a whole that most strikes one. People praise above everything else the bird's-eye view gained by looking into the water of the *bénitier*, but, apart from the questionable taste of using the holy water as a looking-glass, I do not think it equals the effect from the end of the south aisle, near the Lady Chapel. In St. Agnes's Chapel stands the memorial slab of Alexandre Barneval, the architect, embedded for security in the wall, and curious as having attached to it that grim old legend which prevails

at Roslin and other places alike, of the apprentice who beat his master at his own craft, and paid the penalty of success with his life. They are cleaning away from the windows the black which rested on them from the sacrilegious fires of the Revolution, and some of the glass is glorious in colour. Outside, the octagonal tower and the south portal, '*des Marmouzets*,' are the finest points of the building,

From St. Ouen to the cathedral proper, Notre Dame, is but a few minutes' walk through some of those quaint old streets, which, alas! are fast disappearing before the march of improvement. In a few years' time, boulevards will have done away with the old architectural glories of the city, and the traveller will look in vain for such splendid relics of the past as now remain in the Rue Salamandre, the Rue Hallage, and similar places. Passing on the left the archiepiscopal palace, a grand gloomy old building, which might have been the residence of Torquemada himself, we turn in at the side door, and enter the cathedral, not without a wondering glance at the lofty abomination which does duty for a spire, and astonishes gaping tourists. How the city can allow such a disgrace to it to remain is a marvel! It looks like nothing on earth so much as four ladders set up on end and supporting each other; as scaffolding it would be a triumph of workmanship, as a spire it is the apotheosis of vile taste! On entering, the first thought is, of course, to visit the spot where was interred the

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One of the principal sights in Rouen is, of course, the old tower in which, according to commonly-

received tradition, Jeanne d'Arc was imprisoned. It is a fine massive old keep, forming originally a portion of the castle built by Phillippe Auguste, and now stands within the grounds of a convent, on the right-hand side as you go to the railway station. But when we were there they had got the whitewashers in, and the whole place was being scraped, and chipped, and put tidy, with bran new gargoyles and so forth—restoration was doing its worst. There was more leisure to think of La Pucelle, than in the midst of such a bustle, when one walked through the little place, called by her name, wherein she received the reward of her services to France. It is the old story—the cheers of men to-day, the applause of angels to-morrow—

‘Paid by the world—what dost thou owe
Me?’ God might ask—but now instead
’Tis God shall repay—I am safer so !

It was very shocking, no doubt, but it was impossible to help thinking, as one gazed round the restricted space wherein the martyrdom took place, what a capital place it must have been for seeing, and what a fabulous price the upper windows must have commanded !

Desecrated churches form a decided feature in the city. It is pitiful to pass through some of the old doorways, where the *bénitier* still stands full of dust and rubbish, with its mute appeal to all Christian hearts against the cruelty of those who have come into the sanctuary, and broken down the carved work

thereof. Sometimes, as in St. Laurent, the most beautiful of all these ruined temples, the rich colour still remains in fragments of the windows, a coat of arms, perhaps, or the head of a praying saint that seems to ask 'how long,' and there seems a quaint pathos about the present state of St. Laurent—it is turned into a stable, and the manger is in the church now, it may be on the very site of the altar.

At last the time came to leave beautiful Rouen, and with curses, not loud but deep, the awful reckoning was paid, and we started, wondering if Rabelais was in the habit of staying at the Hôtel de France, or whatever may have been its equivalent in his day. *Apropos* of which, I may mention, that the lady who had been good enough to recommend that hostelry kept carefully out of our way for some time after we returned, until, in fact, our wrath might be supposed to have evaporated. Can she have received a commission upon the belongings of such unwary travellers as she could succeed in betraying into the clutches of M. Soulé?

The railway journey to Le Havre is through country not especially notable for its beauty, though it is pretty enough. But it was enlivened for us by the assiduous attentions of a middle-aged sailor, who, having introduced himself as a Nizzard, proceeded to mop and mow in an unintelligible fashion, which was at length discovered to mean that he was a member of some unknown secret society, and wished to claim us as brethren. Perhaps, if he had been comparatively sober

he would have been less indiscreet with strangers ; as it was, protestation was in vain, he gesticulated all the way to Le Havre, very much to his own satisfaction, and finally, in a gush of brotherly love, insisted on our accepting tobacco and lights as a token. We were not sorry to part company with this worthy, of whose possible reappearance I went in terror for some days after. He may have been the original ' Mary Anne ' for aught we knew, in which case, it was rather disappointing, after all one has heard of that mysterious power, to recognise its avatar in the person of a tipsy mariner.

CHAPTER VIII.

LE HÂVRE TO LONDON.

‘SCRIPTURE says an ending of all fine things must be!’

Sings the last of the buccaneers ; and that disagreeable fact applied to Le Hâvre equally with Arves ! The time slipped away so pleasantly that when the fatal Sunday morning arrived, upon which we must once more seek the ‘John Bull’ and return to England, home, and beauty, the whole party felt much as La Reine Blanche is said to have done on a similar occasion. We were not going home, as we understood the word, we didn’t want to go to England, and as for beauty—well, there was quite enough in Normandy to serve our turn, in the country if not in the people. For it must be owned that the peasantry are not beautiful ; the men, it is true, are fine, stalwart fellows, and many of them pleasant to look upon, by reason of their healthy faces ; but the women, however excellent they may be, are about as plain a set as I ever saw out of the Highlands. And to any one who really knows the Highlands, it is needless to say more ; for if ever there was an instance of poetic licence, it is the celebration of the charms of ‘Hieland lasses’ as a rule. Good they are, I grant you, with fine figures many of them, and dear, honest, pure-minded women,

—in spite of fallacious statistics based upon the population of the great towns,—but pretty, no! It is among the old women that you must chiefly look for beauty, when it is the charm of expression and the softening touch of age that has beautified the hard features; and probably the same fact would hold generally good in Normandy, and in most places where the people are of Norse or Pictish origin.

It was a very pleasant oasis in the general desert of modern conventional life, that month in Normandy; a sort of quiet backwater, where one could forget the rush of the stream that hurries one on so fast that there is no time for thought or fancy. We had been with the people of the country for the most part, and had seen little or nothing of the typical tourists, since those few fellow-countrymen with whom we had come into actual contact were gentlemen, and would consequently have been agreeable whether they hailed from London, Edinburgh, or Sydney. And we had found the people a simple, cordial folk, whom it was impossible not to take to, with a refreshing tendency, '*stare super antiquas vias.*' In religious matters this was noticeable. As everybody knows, the observation of a festival is, in the Latin branch of the Church, commonly relegated to the following Sunday; but they follow no such new-fangled arrangements in Normandy. When the *fête* day happens then it is kept, and business does not seem to suffer materially. Just at the time we were there, there was another opportunity for noticing the popular attachment for ancient insti-

tutions, viz., the general desire, quietly enough expressed, that 'the king should have his own again.' If Henri Cinq had depended for his rights upon the suffrages of the Norman peasants, he might have ordered the hangings for St. Denis, and telegraphed to the Pope at once. It may be that the popular loyalty was in part owing to the burden of taxation under which the people groaned, and to their hope of relief under a change of rulers, but there was assuredly a nobler sentiment at work. Also, there was something respectable in their settled conviction that, sooner or later, right must prevail, and the prey of the many-headed monster of central Europe be rescued from captivity. They did not bounce or bluster in talking of Alsace and Lorraine, as one is too much accustomed to think of Frenchman as doing; only, said all, it may be years, one may not then be alive, but it must come.

But the steam is up, and the 'John Bull' has her cargo and her passengers—a mixed multitude—and now we are passing slowly out of the dock, greeted by the farewells of the kind souls who have, in so short a time, taken a place in our memory, rather as humble friends than as mere ministers to our daily wants. How it blew! Very soon the more qualmish of the passengers had betaken themselves below, so as to destroy any faint chance of escaping sea-sickness. Others stopped on deck, and had basins brought, a nasty trick which ought not to be allowed; for, if there is one thing more calculated than another to upset

one's stomach, it is seeing anybody else taken ill. I remember an old western fisherman telling me once that he himself could never stand *that* ! I don't fancy supper was much of a feast down below ; we had ours on deck, and though it was rather suggestive of conjuring, from the way in which the plates and glasses spun and leaped, as the vessel rolled about, it was nicer than going into that awful saloon. I saw quite enough of the horrors of that place in the course of a staggering journey through it on the way to our berths.

The morning broke in the full beauty of a breezy September morning, as we went on deck to smoke an early pipe, and admire the cliffs of Kent ; we were running past the South Foreland, and by breakfast time were at the Nore. Then, with one consent, society came to the fore, pretending it had not been ill ; everybody proceeded to eat as if we had just been saved from a wreck, and, safe in still water, indulged in casual remarks as to their enjoyment of a sea-passage, the excellent appetite inseparable, in each individual instance, from sea air, and other such trifling perversions of particular truth. Then it came on to drizzle, and soon it poured, and ah ! how wistfully we thought of the spotless skies we had experienced for a month past. But there was no help for it, and after all one can work as well, people say, in wet weather as in fine. For my own part, I *can't* ! In order to get the mind into proper working order, there is nothing to my mind like fine, bright weather, with the thermometer

as high as it can go ; but that is a matter of temperament and opinion.

Now the custom-house officers have made a show of examining the luggage, and are gone ; the concealed Tauchnitz is brandished once more ; the boat is at the wharf ; the rain is rather heavier than otherwise ; there is a yelling of porters, and a quarrelling of cabmen, and we are in England once more, and our holiday is over.

APPENDIX.

Showing Expenses of Trip of Ten Days.

EXPENSES of trip between Le Havre, Falaise, Caen, Bayeux, St. Lo, Coutances, Granville, Flers, Caen, and Le Havre.

Monday,		Fr. Cent.
August 11th,	Boat to Honfleur,	2 00
" "	Rail to Lisieux,	5 80
" "	Rail to Falaise,	6 80
" "	Sundries,	1 75
" "	Bill at 'Grand Cerf,'	24 35
" 12th,	Diligence to Caen,	4 20
" "	Sundries,	5 30
" "	Bill at 'Voyageurs,'	9 50
" 13th,	Bill at 'Hôtel Achard,'	11 00
" "	Breakfast at Bayeux,	2 20
" "	Sundries,	6 20
" { 14th,	Sundries at St. Lo,	2 90
" { 15th,	Bill at 'Hôtel de France' (St. Lo),	25 75
" { 16th,	Bill at 'Hôtel de France' (Coutances),	45 00
" { 17th,	Diligence to Granville,	6 00
" { 18th,		
" "	Sundries,	2 00
" 19th,	Bill at 'Hôtel de Londres,'	18 00
" "	Bath, etc.,	3 00
" "	Rail to Flers,	11 60
" 20th,	Bill at 'Hôtel du Nord,	8 00
" "	Sundries	0 60
" "	Rail to Caen,	8 90
" 21st,	Bill at 'Voyageurs,'	16 50
" "	Boat to Le Havre,	14 00
" "	Sundries,	3 00
		<hr/>
		245 11

This was for two persons, and we never stinted ourselves in anything, so that it cannot be called dear; it cost about 11 francs a piece per diem, which included travelling expenses. Sundries included refreshment by the way, sights, etc.

NOTES.

BERNARDIN DE ST. PIERRE AND CASIMIR DELAVIGNE.

JACQUES BERNARDIN HENRI DE ST. PIERRE (born 1737, died 1814) is probably the man with whose name the English public will be most generally familiar, on account of his exquisite pastoral, 'Paul et Virginie'—too little read now in this country, but likely to be revived in popular memory by M. Victor Massé's opera of the same name. His philosophical and other works still await an adequate translator, but those who know the 'Voyage à l'Île de France,' the pretty romances of 'L'Arcadie,' or 'La Chaumière Indienne,' or the singular dramatic dialogue, 'La Mort de Socrate,' will regret that such a writer should not have a wider fame. Of his political principles, this is not the place to speak; suffice it to say that whilst the minister of Louis XVI. offered him a place under Government, Joseph Bonaparte proposed to him later on to receive a pension of six thousand francs, with or without a title, and an official residence. It is traditionary that this charming writer loved above all things a solitary ramble amongst those cliff-fallen rocks, *Les Falaises*, close by St. Adresse.

Jean François Casimir Delavigne was born at La Hâvre, in the month of April 1793. He is best known in this country by his play of *Louis XI.*, which, through the adaptation of Mr. Boucicault, has become so famous, owing to the magnificent interpretation of the principal character by the late Charles Kean, and in which Mr. Henry Irving has lately gained additional reputation as an actor: this, however, is one of the least of his works; his tragedies of 'Marino Faliero,' 'Les Vêpres Siciliennes,' or 'Le Paria,' more fittingly represent his genius; whilst he may claim the honour of having written the most terrible and moving lyric of modern days, 'La Toilette de Constance'—a poem which, in its agony of feeling and its withering satire, leaves other contemporary verse of a similar nature utterly in the background. Mr. Ruskin's mention of this wonderful piece will be fresh in the memory of all admirers of 'Modern Painters,' but, since it is comparatively little known to the general public, I may be pardoned for quoting it *in extenso*:—

LA TOILETTE DE CONSTANCE.

Ballade.

'Vite, Anna ! vite, au miroir !
Plus vite, Anna ! l'heure avance,
Et je vais au bal, ce soir,
Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

'Y pensez-vous ? ils sont fanés, ces nœuds ;
Ils sont d'hier ; mon Dieu ! comme tout passe !
Que du réseau qui retient mes cheveux
Les glands d'azur retombent avec grâce.

Plus haut ! . . . plus bas !—Vous ne comprenez rien.
 Que sur mon front ce saphir étincelle.
 Vous me piquez, maladroite !—Ah ! c'est bien ;
 Bien, chère Anna, je t'aime ; je suis belle.

' Vite, j'en crois mon miroir,
 Et mon cœur bat d'espérance.
 Vite, Anna, je vais ce soir
 Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

' Celui qu'en vain je voudrais oublier . . .
 Anna, ma robe ! . . . il y sera j'espère.
 Ah ! fi, profane ! est-ce là mon collier ?
 Quoi ! ces grains d'or bénits par le Saint-Père ! . . .
 Il y sera ; Dieu ! s'il pressait ma main !
 En y pensant, à peine je respire.
 Frère Anselmo doit en entendre demain :
 Comment ferai-je, Anna, pour tout lui dire ?

' Vite, s'il venait me voir,
 Il me gronderait d'avance.
 Vite, Anna ! je vais ce soir
 Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

' Quoi de plus doux que ce bruit enivrant,
 Que ces clartés dont les feux vous inondent,
 Et ces transports qu'on excite en entrant,
 Et ces regards qui sur vous se confondent !
 Plaisirs trop courts ! Anna, pour les sentir,
 Suffira-t-il d'une nuit tout entière ?
 Pressez-vous donc ! si je tarde à partir,
 Laure avec lui peut danser la première.

' Vite, il brûle de me voir ;
 Prends pitié de sa souffrance.
 Vite, Anna, je vais ce soir
 Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

' Si tu voyais ces groupes se fuyant,
 Se rapprochant pour s'éviter encore,
 Lorsque la valse emporte en tournoyant
 Un couple heureux, qui s'unit, qui s'adore !
 C'est comme un rêve où vos sens éperdus,
 Vos yeux mourants confondent les images :
 La terre fuit sous vos pieds suspendus ;
 On croit glisser, voler sur les nuages.

' Je suis à vous, mon bon oncle, un instant !
 Le cardinal va monter en voiture.
 Et mon bouquet que j'oublie en partant !
 Viens l'attacher : prends garde à ma ceinture.
 Un bal ! un bal ! ce soir je vais au bal . . .
 Anna, pardon si j'ai quitté ma place ;
 Mais je croyais entendre le signal
 Et je dansais : je l'ai vu dans la glace.

'Vite ! un coup d'œil au miroir ;
Le dernier ! . . . j'ai l'assurance
Qu'on va m'adorer ce soir
Chez l'ambassadeur de France !'

Pres du foyer, Constance s'admirait :
Dieu ! sur sa robe il vole une étincelle.
Au feu ! courez . . . Quand l'espoir l'enivrait,
Tout perdre ainsi ! Quoi, mourir ! et si belle !
L'horrible feu rouge avec volupté
Ses bras, son sein, et l'entoure, et s'élève,
Et, sans pitié, dévore sa beauté,
Ses dix-huit ans hélas ! et son doux rêve.

Adieu, bal, plaisir, amour !
On se dit : *Pauvre Constance !*
Et l'on dansa jusqu'au jour
Chez l'ambassadeur de France.

And now after reading it through once more, this most awful and pitiful poem, I feel that my readers owe me gratitude rather than pardon. A translation would be utterly impossible ; it would be, at best, but a paraphrase.

ST. LO.

It is worthy of record that there exists in this ancient town a building, now used as a corn-market, which, prior to the Revolution, was a church under the patronage of St. Thomas of Canterbury (Thomas Becket). The story concerning it runs thus :—The church was in course of erection when Becket, seeking refuge from the rage of Henry II. of England, entered France, and sojourned for a time at St. Lo. It seems that there was some dispute as to the dedication of the new edifice, and the question being referred to the Archbishop, he answered—'Let the church be dedicated to the first saint who shall shed his blood for the Catholic faith.' For himself was that glory destined, since his martyrdom took place in 1171, two years after which he was canonised. The original church was finished in 1174.

THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

AFTER reciting the vicissitudes to which this quaint monument of mediæval housewifery has been exposed, M. Pluquet speaks to the following effect :—

'I think that this monument is contemporary with the Conquest : it is the work neither of the first nor of the second Matilda ; it was executed by order of Odo, brother of the Conqueror, who helped him by all the means in his power. He alone had authority and influence to place a secular monument in a sacred place. I uphold the antiquity of our tapestry by proofs drawn from the monument itself—irrefragable

proofs which no negative arguments can diminish. All the architectural portions found therein are Roman, not an ogive, not an intersection; nearly all the letters are Roman in the inscriptions; lastly, the costumes again are Roman—the tunic, the draperies, the cross-garterings, the foot-gear, etc., all prove that this monument is of the end of the eleventh century, and that it was executed shortly after the Conquest; it carries its date, and carries it in a sure manner. I will pass quickly in review the principal objections which are made against the antiquity of the Bayeux Tapestry:—

‘1st. The silence of historians, notably of Wace.

‘It was not the custom of the mediæval historians to mention monuments of any kind: “so goes the story,” “as we read,” “we find it written,” “so, he of Jumièges”—these are all the authorities of our old historians.

‘2d. In the edging are to be seen some subjects taken from the fables of Esop and Phædrus, and these were not known at that time.

‘This is an error; they were known long before. Fréculphe, Bishop of Lisieux, who lived in the ninth century, says that Edward the Confessor caused the Fables of Esop to be translated. Ingulphus tells us that Alfred translated them out of Greek into Saxon in the ninth century.

‘3d. The word *Franci* is found in the tapestry, and the Normans never called themselves *French*.

‘Wace, who was a Norman, himself calls the Normans ‘French’ in several parts of his works, and notably in speaking of the battle of Hastings.

‘4th. Bayeux was burned by Henry I. in 1106, and the conflagration must inevitably have destroyed the tapestry.

‘Wace says distinctly that the treasures were carried away from the cathedral before the conflagration.

“*Tote fut l’eglise destruite,
E la richesce fors conduite ?*”
—(*R. de Rou.*)

‘5th. The inventory of William the Conqueror’s valuables, drawn up in 1087, makes no mention of it.

‘This tapestry did not belong to William, and would not figure in the inventory of his goods.’

M. Pluquet goes on to cite the different works which have from time to time appeared in relation to the question. The curious reader may be referred for this, as for much other valuable and interesting matter relating to Bayeux and its environs, to the original ‘*Essai historique*,’ printed at Caen in the year 1829. As far as the tapestry is concerned, later research has added nothing to the information therein contained.

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